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DEMOCRACY AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

DEMOCRACY AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

BY

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WERE DELIVERED.

PREFACE

DURING the academic session just ended, I had the honour to be invited to lecture in the Universities of Sheffield, Edinburgh, and London on subjects related to Democracy and the British Empire. At Sheffield I tried to show that there is nothing incompatible between representative government and British imperialism, but rather that the same qualities of individual freedom and practical ability which gave us our popular constitution also manifested themselves in our overseas expansion. At Edinburgh I dwelt on the development of democracy, first in the British Isles, and secondly in the self-governing Dominions of the Empire, and

showed how each in turn has been a nursery of political progress. Finally, in my own University and College I spoke of the present and the future, emphasising the importance of the Empire for the well-being of humanity at large, indicating the vital necessity of the maintenance of its democratic traditions, and pointing out the dangers which threaten them.

I had no original intention of publishing these lectures, which, indeed, were delivered merely from outline notes. They contained little that was new, being, in fact, not much more than expansions of some of the highly compressed later sections of my *Democracy at the Crossways*, published in 1918. A strong wish, however, was expressed in influential quarters that I should put them into writing and have them printed. Messrs. Constable and Co., who have issued several series of King's College

Lectures, very kindly undertook the responsibility of publication.

In hastily writing these lectures out I have treated their substance very freely, welding it, so far as I have been able, into a single and consistent whole. I have also felt it right in the concluding section, in view of the trend of events during the present summer, to speak a good deal more fully and plainly concerning the menace of " direct action " to both democracy and empire than I considered it either necessary or proper to do to my academic audiences. Even so, however, I fear that I have been unable to give adequate expression to my consciousness of danger or to my sense of the urgency of the need for precaution and defence. It seems clear to me that democracy, having escaped the Scylla of Prussianism, has yet to steer clear of the Charybdis of Bolshevism; and that the

Empire, having resisted attacks from without, has yet to avoid disintegration from within. I can only hope that my poor words may do something to further the two great and kindred causes of popular self-government and imperial unity.

F. J. C. HEARNSHAW.

KING'S COLLEGE,
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON,
July 23, 1920.

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SECTION I

THE TERMS "DEMOCRACY" AND "EMPIRE"

DEMOCRACY AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

SECTION I

THE TERMS "DEMOCRACY" AND "EMPIRE"

At first sight the terms "democracy" and "empire" seem to be incompatible with one another. "Democracy," Greek in origin, connotes self-government, local autonomy, liberty. "Empire," Latin in its source and military in its primary signification, calls up ideas of conquest, subjugation, autocracy based on force, alien domination. Further, this apparently irreconcilable conflict of connotations seems to be confirmed by a cursory survey of history. For on the one hand the democracies of the past never succeeded in maintaining empires, while on the other hand the great empires of the past were

uniformly authoritarian and anti-democratic. Few sayings of classical antiquity have attained a wider currency than the remark which Thucydides attributes to the arch-demagogue Cleon: "A democracy cannot manage an empire,"* and few sayings have been more fully justified by circumstances. For the Athenian democracy, sovereign over a wide maritime domain, had with reckless vacillation (*μεταμέλεια*) just revoked a resolution made and acted on only the day before. It is nothing to the point that the original resolution—that all the adult males of rebel Mitylene should be put to death, and all the women and children sold as slaves—was flagrantly monstrous and immoral. A humane philosopher, indeed, might have made it an additional charge against the impulsive demos that it had shown itself capable of

* This is Jowett's rendering of the famous passage in Thucydides, Book III., Chapter 37. The original runs: *πολλάκις μὲν ἤδη ἔγωγε καὶ ἀλλοτε ἔγνων δημοκρατίαν ὅτι ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν ἑτέρων ἄρχειν.*

malignant wickedness. But Cleon's point was that it did not know its own mind two days running; that its policy lacked that consistency and continuity which marked the conduct of affairs by autocrats and oligarchs; and that, however harmless constant oscillations might be in the administration of a city-state, they must speedily be fatal in the government of numerous and distant dependencies. The sequel justified the judgment of Cleon. He spoke in 427 B.C. Within a quarter of a century the Athenian Empire had vanished away, and Athens herself, paralysed by corruption and faction, had passed beneath the heel of the militant aristocracy of Sparta.

But if history seems to support the proposition that a democracy cannot manage an empire, not less emphatically does it appear to lend countenance to the view that an empire cannot be, or at any rate cannot remain, democratic. All the Oriental empires were despotisms. Rome in proportion as she became imperial shed her

democratic institutions; allowed her popular assemblies to fall into desuetude; transferred her sovereignty to the hands of senators, bureaucrats, and soldiers; and finally allowed all authority to be concentrated in the omnipotence of Cæsar. The Medieval Empire shared with the Papacy the dual control of Christendom, and exercised over the Western world that theoretical monarchy in secular affairs which belonged properly to the supreme lay representative of the autocracy of God. The modern empires of the two Napoleons, founded though both of them were upon the dogma of the sovereignty of the people, developed into highly centralised tyrannies impatient of popular control. Efforts to democratise the first ended in St. Helena; the vain pretence of liberalising the second culminated in Sedan. The Russian Empire as established by the Czars became the very model of despotism; the Austrian Empire as conceived by Metternich was the exact negation of democracy and the antithesis

of national self-determination; the German Empire as created by Bismarck, although painted to look like a democracy, with its monstrous Reichstag in the foreground, was in reality an organisation whose effective works were all in the power of an invisible bureaucracy beyond the reach of the people. The list is an ominous one, confirmatory of the etymological antagonism between empire and democracy.

But what of the British Empire and the British democracy? Is it true in this, as in the other cases, that on the one hand the self-governing community of Britain cannot manage distant dominions, or that on the other hand the position of distant dominions is incompatible with their own self-determination? That is the problem which we have to consider, and we will preface our consideration by a closer discussion of the meanings of the two terms " democracy " and " empire," as they have historically been employed in this particular case. *Democracy* in Britain has been pri-

marily not a form of government but a form of state. That is to say, it has not been a direct democracy in which the community as a whole has acted without intermediaries in legislature, executive, and judiciary; but an indirect or representative democracy in which, while the people have become the final possessors of power, the actual work of government—the making of laws, the administering of departments, the constitution of courts of justice—has been entrusted to responsible agents. No doubt it is possible, if we trace British institutions to their sources, to find traces in far distant primitive days of folkmotes, tribal assemblies, clan gatherings, village communities, and town meetings, in which for limited groups of people or for restricted local areas rudimentary government of a directly democratic order existed—government not unlike that which was the glory of Periclean Athens, or the precious treasure of the medieval forest cantons of Switzerland. But the consolidation of the Saxon

Heptarchy into the Kingdom of England was the end of the possibility of direct democracy in England; while in Celtic Scotland, Ireland, and Wales such tribal autonomy as had existed passed away as circumstances compelled the formation of the larger political units of principality or monarchy. Geographical extension, if nothing else, made representative democracy the only form of popular government feasible in the states which, in the natural process of evolution, supplanted and absorbed the diminutive communities of the primitive folk. Now representative democracy is elective aristocracy, and there is nothing in either the dictum of Cleon or the records of history to suggest that the defects which disqualify a direct democracy to exercise dominion over dependencies necessarily exist in representatives chosen because of their high character and expert skill. Elected experts, however insistently their responsibility to the sovereign people is emphasised, are able to gain a knowledge,

to exercise a restraint, to take a large and calm survey of political problems which free them from those perils of rash, impulsive, ill-considered, and unprincipled actions which beset the sovereign people when it acts without agents in reckless and instantaneous omnipotence. The expression "a governing class" is at present in disfavour, and the disfavour is well merited if the term is meant to imply that any group in the state has an hereditary right to administer its affairs; but the reaction against "a governing class" is carried too far if it obscures or denies the fact that administration is a business that requires specialised skill—a business of peculiar intricacy and difficulty in which, as in the analogous occupations of lawyers and doctors, inherited skill and aptitudes acquired by early environment count for much. The British Empire comprises nearly one-fourth of the land-area of the globe, and it includes not far short of one-fourth of the human race. Within its vast compass dwell all sorts and

conditions of men, and out of their complex and various affairs arise problems of infinite diversity and intricacy. Lifetimes of study and long generations of experience are necessary if the trained representatives of the British democracy are to "manage" without disaster the Empire for which in the course of events they have become responsible.

That expression "manage the empire" brings us to the second definition which we have to discuss. Has the term "empire" as qualified by the adjective "British" the same connotation as it had when it was used in reference to the Athenian hegemony over the islands of the Ægean and the ports of the Asiatic littoral? Does it mean what it did when it was applied to the Roman imperium over the multitudinous subject peoples between the Atlantic and the Persian Gulf, the Sahara and the Wall of Hadrian? Is its sense the same as that in which it is employed in describing the rule of the Czars over the Finns, the Germans over the Poles, or the

Austrians over the Southern Slavs? It is not. Not only is the British Empire an organisation totally different in kind from those just mentioned; even the term "empire" has in Britain acquired a peculiar and distinctive connotation which places it in a category apart and deprives it of almost all the sinister significance which it acquired during its two thousand years of Continental currency.

The British Empire is an organism of modern growth. It has sprung up entirely within the last three centuries. The so-called "spacious days of great Elizabeth" were spacious only in spiritual prospect and intellectual outlook. Territorially no English Sovereign from the Norman Conquest to the present day has ruled over so restricted a domain as fell to the lot of Elizabeth. In the very year of her accession Calais, the last relic of the Continental dominions of the medieval English monarchs, was lost. Not until four years after the death of the Virgin Queen was Virginia, the

first of English colonies, founded. The development of the Empire from insignificant and undesigned beginnings during the brief span of nine generations is unquestionably one of the most striking phenomena of recent history, even if it does not bear comparison in importance with the longer and more deliberate establishment of the earlier Empire of Rome. In the next section I shall have to speak of the manner of its formation, and to contrast its spontaneous and natural growth with the artificial and forceful construction of its predecessors and rivals. At present I am dealing only with terms, and the point which I want to impress is this: that, although the British Empire itself is a novel and a recent thing, the word " empire " is an old one in the English political vocabulary, and that it has planted itself there in a peculiar insular connotation. It was used by medieval monarchs before the Norman Conquest, when as yet their hold over England itself was insecure, and

ages anterior to the time when the voyages of discovery had opened up new worlds and made the dream of overseas dominions possible. It was used by them to connote not conquest but independence; it was adopted in their title, not to indicate claims to rule alien peoples, but to assert their own freedom from external control. Southern Britain had been part of the Roman Empire, and the claims of Rome had never been formally abandoned. The sixth-century mission of St. Augustine to Kent and the subsequent conversion of the English to Catholic Christianity had brought the country once again within the ghostly jurisdiction of the imperial city, and had revived the undying Roman tradition. The re-creation of the Roman Empire itself under Charlemagne in the year 800 still further confirmed the memory of the Latin domination, and made its reassertion a grave issue of practical politics. Charlemagne himself, it is true, although proud in the belief that he was the veritable

successor of the imperial line of Honorius, made no attempt actually to exercise authority over Britain. But the pretensions to jurisdiction were implicit in his titles and his office, and by some of his successors they were made explicit and peremptory. It was when in the next century the powerful Saxon King of Germany had been crowned as Emperor in Rome that Edgar the Peaceable, Saxon King of Wessex, asserted his own independence and the autonomy of his realm by adopting Roman style and proclaiming himself "totius Albionis imperator Augustus." This high-sounding appellation, which would appear ridiculous as applied to a ruler whose direct control extended only from Thames to Channel, becomes intelligible when it is seen to connote not only a superiority over the other kings in Albion, but also a sovereignty independent of, and equal to, that of the German overlord of Continental Christendom. The German emperors, however, persistent in their obsession that they

were Roman Cæsars, were very slow to forget that England was in theory part of their dominions. When the Emperor Henry VI. held Richard I. a prisoner, he did not let him go until, as Hoveden records, he had "divested himself of his kingdom of England, and surrendered it to the Emperor as to the lord of all men." Edward II. felt it necessary to declare "regnum Angliæ ab omni subjectione imperiali esse liberrimum." Edward III. was compelled formally to repudiate the claim to superiority made by Lewis the Bavarian. Henry V., when he was visited by the Emperor Sigismund, thought it proper to require a clear statement from his august visitor before he was allowed to land that he came with no intention of exercising imperial authority within the realm of England; Sigismund evinced no surprise at the requirement of Henry, and he gave the desired stipulation without demur. At the time when this incident occurred, indeed, the Holy Roman Empire had become

a mere name; its jurisdiction had long been limited to Germany, with whose kingship the imperial office had become assimilated; even in Germany it had lost effective control in the presence of feudal magnates and leagued cities. A far more formidable heir to the Roman tradition of universal dominion had arisen in the secularised and triumphant Papacy. Having by the year 1300, after a long conflict, humiliated and overthrown the Roman Empire, which it had revived five hundred years before, it claimed not only the cure of all the souls of men, but also that temporal authority which the emperors had neglected to exercise, or had abused. The highest pretensions of the Papacy were voiced by Boniface VIII. when, at or about the great Jubilee of A.D. 1300, he appeared before the Roman multitude clad in armour and carrying a sword, proclaiming in words which asserted the plenitude of power: "I am Pope; I am Cæsar." The claims of the late-medieval Papacy to universal

empire roused to fierce antagonism the rising national spirit of the Teutonic peoples. Patriotism was the motive force behind the Protestantism of Germany; the passion for insular independence was the power which enabled Henry VIII. to defy the Papacy in the sixteenth century and to "break the bonds of Rome." In repudiating the supremacy of the Petrine See, Henry VIII. used precisely the same term which Edgar had employed some six centuries earlier in asserting his independence of the Holy Roman Empire. He asserted that his kingdom was also an empire, and he added explanations of the word which make it clearly manifest that he had no thought of conquest or external dominion in his mind, but that he was solely concerned to maintain to the fullest extent the autonomy of his monarchy and the all-embracing authority of the throne. The preamble to the famous Act of Supremacy begins: "Where by divers sundry old authentic histories and chronicles it is mani-

festly declared and expressed that the realm of England is an empire and so hath been accepted in the world; governed by one supreme head and King, and having the dignity and royal estate of the imperial crown of the same, unto whom a body politic, compact of all sorts and degrees of people, divided in terms and by names of spirituality and temporality, been bounden and owen to bear, next to God, a natural and humble obedience," and so on.*

It will thus be seen that in English history the term "empire" is in brief form a declaration of independence. It proclaims freedom from foreign jurisdiction, and not a claim to exercise jurisdiction over foreigners. It is the assertion of insular autonomy, and not a pretension to world-

* Statute 24 Henry VIII., cap. 12; quoted Medley, D. J., *Original Illustrations of English Constitutional History*, pp. 219-220. *Cf.* also Blackstone, *Commentaries*, vol. i., p. 242 (A.D. 1765): "The legislature uses 'empire' to assert that our King is sovereign and independent within these his dominions."

dominion. It was used in respect of England herself, and it had no sort of reference to overseas territories. It was a synonym of liberty and self-determination, not of conquest and subjugation. Hence, far from the terms "democracy" and "empire" in their original senses being incompatible with one another, they express but two aspects of the same idea. "Democracy" means government of the people, by the people, and for the people; "empire," as the tenth-century Edgar and the sixteenth-century Henry used it, does little more than describe a state exempt from outside interference. The one connotes internal autonomy, the other external sovereignty; the terms are complementary, not contradictory.

If, however, the English "empire" of the Middle Ages and the early modern era was merely the independent Kingdom of England, and if it was a realm in which democratic institutions had a deep root, and in which they continued to maintain

themselves, what of the British "empire" of these later days? By what means has the marvellous expansion of England taken place? What sort of an organisation is that which has come to embrace so large a part of the habitable globe and so many races of mankind? How far is empire of this modern type congruous with democracy? What has been the history of democracy in the various constituent members of the Empire? Such are the questions which now confront us, and in order to approach them effectively it seems desirable to give a brief preliminary sketch of the history of the Empire. A rapid survey is, of course, alone possible. No details can be presented, nor are any required. For the purpose of this summary is not to give information to those (unhappily still to be found) who are wholly ignorant of the processes by which the Empire has been built, but rather to show that these processes have been in the main quite in harmony with the processes which have led

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to the unification of the three kingdoms, and in general not discordant with the processes which have enabled the peoples of the three kingdoms to advance in freedom, wealth, and self-government. The term "empire" has not degenerated from its fine medieval meaning as it has enlarged its denotation. It has not become a term of which we need to be ashamed, concerning which we have to offer apologies, or for which we require to seek substitutes. It is a noble term with a splendid and peculiarly English tradition, extending for a thousand years into the storied past. Still less is the British Empire itself an institution for which excuses have to be found. Among human polities there are few whose records are more generally honourable; few whose work in the world has been more largely beneficent; few whose power and influence have been more widely exerted for the good of mankind. The British Empire has stood for peace, for freedom, for justice, for equal law, for health, for wealth, for religion, and

for humanity. It has been the nursery of self-government among backward peoples, it has been the emancipator of slaves and the guardian of the oppressed. If democracy has become possible in the world at large, it is mainly due to the fact that the British Empire, with its defensive fleets and armies, has set a term to tyrants. If the world is to be kept safe for democracy, the indispensable condition is that the British Empire—together with the United States of America, which once formed part of it and still shares its traditions—shall remain strongly consolidated as the firm foundation of the League of Nations.

SECTION II

THE GROWTH OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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BEFORE the word "empire" in the Roman world acquired its sinister military significance it simply connoted high rule widely extended. In that sense it is peculiarly applicable to the dominions administered under the British flag. For these dominions form a girdle round the earth, linked by the sea and secured by the fleet. They constitute not a military state, but a vast confederation of some seventy members, among whom are representatives of almost every stage of political development, from tribal monarchy to collectivist republicanism. The majority of these incorporated communities occupy territories unknown to, and undreamed of by, the "august emperor" Edgar and his contemporaries in the narrow world of medieval Christendom: territories which were but dimly

appearing above the horizon of knowledge in that Renaissance dawn wherein the "imperial" Henry lived. It is one of the curious phenomena of history that islands and continents, some of them within easy reach of the populous and well-explored countries of the world of classical antiquity, should have remained for countless generations unsought and unsuspected by the adventurous spirit of man. But, though curious, it is not inexplicable. The men of ancient and medieval times were possessed by a false astronomy and a false geography: they believed that the earth was the centre of the solar system, and, indeed, the hub of the universe; they imagined it as a flat plane encircled by shoreless seas; they had no conception of the possibility of undiscovered continents. Again, even if they had suspected the existence of Atlantis, Oceana, America, Australia, or Utopia, neither their ships nor their instruments of navigation would have qualified them to embark upon the search

for these distant or visionary worlds. Their ships, until the dawn of modern days, were small undecked vessels, propelled by oars, incapable of weathering the tempests of open oceans, or of carrying the commissariat for long voyages. Until the same late date the compass, the quadrant or sextant, and the chronometer were unknown to them; hence in navigation they had to hug the shore, to seek the shortest transits, or, for the rest, when pushed to it, to place their trust in the fitful and indifferent guidance of the stars. Further, they were poor, preoccupied by the mere struggle for existence, politically distracted, ecclesiastically obsessed. For them the world was full of difficulties and dangers; life was short and toilsome; eternity loomed in the immediate foreground dark and insistent.

The close of the Middle Ages, however, saw a great change. The astronomy of Copernicus superseded that of Ptolemy; the sound geography of Eratosthenes was

rediscovered, and new knowledge gained by travellers added to it; maps based on accurate surveys began to be circulated; Venetian and Genoese shipbuilders constructed vessels capable of ocean voyages and carrying sails; instruments of navigation brought from the East, and perfected by Western ingenuity, rendered the sailor independent alike of the dangerous companionship of the shore and the treacherous direction of the heavens. The era of the great explorations began. The Portuguese, inspired by Henry the Navigator (grandson of the English John of Gaunt), first found the islands of the Southern Atlantic, surveyed the African coast, and opened up the Cape route to the Orient. The Spaniards, following the lead of Christopher Columbus, reached the West Indies, and then achieved the tremendous discovery of the New World, wherein dwelt scanty races of men, long sundered from their Eurasian kindred, and cradled in a civilisation, high of its kind, but strangely different from that which

had developed in the Old World under the combined influences of Semites, Hellenes, Latins, and Teutons. The amazing successes of Portuguese and Spanish explorers, together with the stories, incredible yet true, which returning voyagers brought back to Europe, of lands of golden fertility and peoples of a primitive fascination, caused French privateers, Dutch merchantmen, and English Channel-rovers all to set off in search of Eldorado and the Islands of the Blest. Time, of course, brought disillusionment. Experience destroyed all luring dreams of riches to be acquired without toil, and luxury to be enjoyed without satiety. But time and experience together gave practical wisdom—the φρόνησις so much valued by the Greeks—and gradually all the sea-going peoples of Europe planted settlements in the newly discovered lands and developed a mutually profitable commerce with the aborigines.

The English entered late—and the other nations of the British Isles later still—into

the work of exploration, discovery, settlement, and commerce. It is true that in Henry VII.'s time, before ever Columbus had reached the mainland of America, the Cabots sailed from Bristol and attained to Labrador. But this was a premature enterprise of alien initiation which neither the parsimony of the Tudor king nor the penury of the English people was fitted to follow up. Not until the dissensions due to the Wars of the Roses had been healed; not until the absorbing religious crisis of the Reformation had been passed; not until the peril of Spanish conquest had been removed by the glorious triumph of the English seamen over the "Invincible Armada"; not until the lawless particularism of the medieval cities and companies, guilds and confraternities, had become enlarged into a more ennobling devotion to "the commonwealth of this realm of England"; not, in short, until the end of the reign of the fortunate and well-served (rather than great) Elizabeth, was England

ready to take her place and play her part in the nascent work of the unification of the world.

I say "England was ready"; I should rather have said "the English were ready." For it is noteworthy that when the time and opportunity for overseas adventure came, it was private enterprise and not administrative foresight that took advantage of them. In this respect the commercial and colonial expansion of England presents a marked difference from those of the other states of Europe. It was the Portuguese Government that backed and fostered the efforts of Henry the Navigator; it was the patronage of Ferdinand and Isabella that enabled Columbus to make his voyages to the Far West; it was the Bourbon monarchy which promoted and protected the French East India Company and furthered the exploration of the rivers and inland seas of North America; it was the Republic of the United Netherlands which established the Dutch Empire

in the Spice Islands and planted the outposts of a worldwide dominion in South Africa, New Holland (Australia), and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). Moreover, when Portuguese, Spaniards, Frenchmen, or Hollanders succeeded in founding a distant trading-station or settling a colony, the home government not only regarded the new acquisition as an estate to be worked for the benefit of the mother-country, but also continued to keep it under rigid control. The laws and regulations which applied in Europe were extended to the New World. Above all, the religious orthodoxies which were enforced at home were maintained and extended with anxious zeal and missionary fervour abroad. Heretics on the European Continent knew that to flee from Portugal to Brazil, from Spain to Mexico, from France to Canada, was to jump from the frying-pan into the fire; across the Atlantic they found a more inquisitive bureaucracy and a more effective Inquisition than they had

left behind them in the decadent Christendom of the Old World.

Very different was it in the case of the English. On the one hand the Government gave them but little support, afforded them but scanty protection, left them to their own devices, tended to disavow them when they got into mischief and were caught, allowed them to languish in foreign prisons and to perish at the hands of alien priests, saw them without apparent pity or regret fail and break and die. But, on the other hand, it did not interfere with them; it let them go anywhere they chose; it suffered them to do what they liked and to make any experiments they thought fit to try, it permitted them to gather unmolested the enormous profits of success; above all, it did not pursue them with religious persecution, but winked at heresy, provided it were not combined with sedition, and granted informally a freedom of belief and worship unparalleled at that time among men.

Of the two great root-principles of democracy—viz., liberty and equality—liberty has been ever the more precious to the English conscience; while by the French equality has been preferred. The English through unnumbered generations have felt that the supreme good of life is freedom for self-realisation—freedom to choose a career; freedom to wander at will through the world; freedom to work or to cease from work; freedom to think, speak, and write; freedom to approach individually and without unnecessary intermediaries the throne of the heavenly grace. The English passion for freedom found full scope during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods in the uncharted oceans and the unexplored continents which the voyagers of the preceding generations had brought within the ken of the Western world. The Channel rovers, fired by the Marian persecutions with a fanatical hatred of the Papacy and Spain, extended their unlicensed operations throughout the Atlantic

and far into the distant Pacific, combining in a strange amalgam Protestant fervour with piratical ferocity. Free-traders, like John Hawkins, defying the monopolies of Portugal and Spain, or daring the hostility of don and devil, opened up a contraband commerce with forbidden lands and made themselves rich—provided they were fortunate enough to escape total destruction—by means of illicit adventure. Privateers, like Francis Drake, casting off all disguises, waged open war on their own account against the peninsular powers (which in 1580 became united under the sceptre of Philip II.), finally compelling them in mere self-defence to fit out the avenging Armada. More peaceful explorers and knights-errant, such as Frobisher and Davis, sought to find, by way of the Arctic north, new routes to India and Cathay, along which English merchandise could pass without fear of molestation on the part of either the unfriendly Latins or the malignant Turks. Finally, men of

large vision and heroic deed, among whom Humphrey Gilbert and Walter Raleigh stand pre-eminent, began to dream of New Englands overseas, and in order to realise their dreams dared to venture and to sacrifice wealth and ease and life itself in efforts to plant settlements of their fellow-countrymen under the flag of St. George on the outskirts of the New World.

It was not given to Gilbert, or to Raleigh, or to any of their Tudor contemporaries, to succeed in establishing an enduring colony beyond the seas. California, Newfoundland, Virginia, Guiana, in all of which the sovereignty of the callous Elizabeth was proclaimed, passed by one or another process of abandonment or disaster back into the primeval and all-but-ownerless solitude in which they had been discovered. Not until James I. was upon the throne did growing experience secure, and favouring fortune confirm, the first continuing successes to the pioneers of the expansion of England. It is noteworthy

that these successes came in immediate sequence to the union of the two Crowns, and the consequent cessation of the long and wasteful agony of the Border wars. Increasingly, as the old Anglo-Scottish enmity died down, and as Northerners and Southerners entered into adventurous partnership, did representatives of the two kindred British peoples join to extend a common commerce and enlarge a common dominion, until finally in 1707 the Act of Union made the two peoples one. In the reign of James I., however, the English element was still dominant, and it was the English who made four settlements which, as it happened, were so curiously typical of the main kinds of establishments that were destined during the following centuries to develop into the British Empire that it is worth while to pause for a moment to contemplate them. It will be seen that into their planting few factors of force or fraud entered; that they were the natural and justifiable outcomes of vigorous vitality

at home; that they were on the whole thoroughly beneficial to all, both native and immigrant, affected by them; that, in fine, they differed entirely from the imperial acquisitions of the despotisms of antiquity, and were the proper manifestations of the novel liberty, the aspiring energy, and the dawning democracy characteristic of the nascent modern world.

In 1607 a company of one hundred and four men, who had taken up Sir Walter Raleigh's abandoned project of a Virginia settlement, planted themselves on an unoccupied (and, as events proved, insalubrious) spot near the mouth of the James River. They were there to make their fortunes, and they had hopes of gold. After vain search for visionary ingots, and after suffering many tribulations, they learned that their aureate future lay in tobacco-growing. They began to grow it, to their own great profit and to the incalculable consolation of the Old World. This settlement was a colony proper.

Two years later a ship with Sir George Somers on board, making for Virginia, was wrecked on the Bermudas. The islands were entirely without inhabitants, and they were off the routes of the still infrequent sailing vessels. The voyagers who survived the disaster were compelled to shift for themselves and to make provision for a possibly long internment. They built wooden huts; they sowed seed; they organised a polity; they made themselves so comfortable in their unsought home that when, after nearly a year, rescuers arrived, some of the settlers elected to remain. Thus the first of the West Indian island groups passed into English possession. For some time the new occupiers had to content themselves with the pioneer work of building and cultivation; but when this was done they learned that the climate and soil of these islands is peculiarly suited to the growth of the sugar-cane. Hence the West Indies developed into industrial plantations rather

than into colonies proper. Here, even more fully than in the case of Virginia, there was a complete absence of expropriation, exploitation, conquest, subjugation. An unoccupied and unfruitful region of the earth was converted into a garden and devoted to the service of man. At the time when this process was in its initial stages—viz., in 1612—the English East India Company (incorporated twelve years earlier) established its first factory, or trading-station, on the mainland of the Asiatic continent. For some considerable period its commerce had been growing, and it urgently needed an emporium on the coast where it could store its commodities and whither the Indian merchants could bring theirs. The Portuguese, jealous of their old monopoly, opposed; but in 1612 this opposition was overcome. Permission to build a "factory" at Surat was willingly conceded by the native ruler and was ratified by a firman of the Great Mogul. There was no conquest,

but a purely commercial transaction—purely commercial, even though fraught with tremendous political consequences, which at the time no one foresaw or suspected. Finally, in 1620, occurred the last of the four notable imperial events of James's reign. The Pilgrim Fathers sailed from Southampton to found the first of the New England settlements in North America. These, like the Virginians, were colonists proper. But, unlike the Virginians, they did not cross the Atlantic in search of gold and glory: they went impelled by religious zeal and drawn by a desire to find a home where, under the English flag, they could worship God in the manner which they held to be right. Their going forced King James to face a crucial question, already alluded to. For twelve years they had been exiles in Holland, enjoying toleration, but suffering much economic hardship, and increasingly tending to lose their English nationality. Much as they wished to retain the English name, they dared not

venture to leave their Dutch asylum without some assurance that their freedom of worship would not be interfered with in the New World. They therefore, through friends at Court, sought for a royal guarantee. James was in a dilemma. He was tolerant and easy-going by nature; he abhorred persecution; he was anxious to see his dominion and authority extended beyond the Atlantic. But he dared not openly repudiate the recusancy laws, flout the bishops, or defy the potent prejudices of the Anglican Parliament. He therefore found a compromise which goes far to prove him, for all his birth, a truly naturalised Englishman. He told them that he could not formally sanction their dissent, but that they could feel confident that they should not be molested, provided that they conducted themselves peacefully and did nothing to the prejudice of Church or State. With this assurance they had to be content. It was enough. Although they were placed under the nominal

jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, and although the Bishop of London was soon none other than the formidable William Laud himself, yet they were left to go their own ways, and they were able to develop in freedom a polity, civil and ecclesiastical, founded upon a social compact, which seemed to contemporary observers such as Hobbes (and to Locke after him) to be the very reproduction of that primitive organisation of mankind which came into existence as the human race emerged from the prehistoric state of nature. The same liberty which was accorded to Calvinists by James was extended to Catholics by Charles, and Maryland became a place of refuge for those on whom the recusancy laws of England pressed hardly.

Such were the four types of successful settlements made during the opening years of the seventeenth century—economic colonies, island plantations, commercial factories, places of religious retreat. The point to be re-emphasised is that all of them

were made without fighting, not by way of conquest, but by peaceful occupation—three out of the four in regions void of inhabitants or but sparsely peopled; the other—viz., the station at Surat—with the cordial goodwill of the aborigines. They were the natural and healthy expressions of the vigorous and enterprising English race as soon as it emerged from the disunion and domestic disorder which had fettered its activities during the Middle Ages. The same processes of peaceful expansion continued until towards the close of the seventeenth century. In India factories similar to that at Surat were established at Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. In the West Indies plantations were made upon the untenanted Barbados; upon some of the Leeward Islands and a few of the Windward Islands; upon the Bahamas. But, above all, no less than twelve colonies proper were founded upon the North American littoral as the result of an emigration—due to religious, political,

and economic causes—unparalleled since the days of Magna Græcia. It is true that now and again, here and there, throughout these rapidly expanding and widely scattered groups of dominions, conflicts occurred; and it is true that one island, half-derelict—viz., Jamaica—was occupied during the course of a war with Spain (1655). But conflict was a mere episode; it was not of the essence of the matter. The first English Empire was built, not by conquest, but by pacific acquisition. The world was large; vast undeveloped and unpeopled regions called with irresistible lure to the adventurous and the free; there was room for all, and more than all, that the old countries of Europe could send; the multitudes who went found in primeval solitudes the havens of their desire.

The changes which took place in the politics of Europe at the close of the seventeenth century, however, inaugurated a new and very different era of colonial expansion.

The War of the English Succession which the expulsion of James II. entailed (1689–97), together with the War of the Spanish Succession which followed the extinction of the Habsburg line in the Peninsula (1700–14), brought Britain face to face with the hostile Bourbon powers of the Continent: first, with Louis XIV. of France; secondly, with his grandson, Philip V., the new King of Spain; thirdly, with Philip's sons, whom their termagant mother, Elizabeth Farnese, managed to place upon the thrones of the Sicilies and Parma. A hundred years' struggle ensued. It began confusedly enough in squabbles concerning dynastic inheritances, partitions of territories, and portions of princes. But gradually it became clear that far larger issues were involved. It was seen that the real matters at stake were command of the sea, maritime commerce, and colonial empire. This truth—hidden from the Whigs who wallowed in Hanoverian ease, and from the Tories who involved

themselves in a web of Jacobite conspiracies —was first perceived by the insight of William Pitt the elder. He it was who, in the Seven Years' War (1756–63), turned British endeavour from the fruitless glories of such victories as Malplaquet or Dettingen, and—while the Bourbons were absorbed in Continental complications —concentrated the whole effort of the united nations of these islands upon the great tasks of securing an indisputable ascendancy at sea, and then by means of sea-power thwarting the implacable hostility of the Bourbon enemy in every part of the world. Thus the elder Pitt was the founder of the second British Empire which, as we shall see, differed in several marked respects from the first. The French and Spanish fleets having been decisively defeated in 1759, the Bourbon dominion was overthrown in North America, in India, and (though for a short time only) in the West Indies. During later phases of the struggle, when Pitt's son stood in his

father's place of responsibility and power, a settlement was made in Australia, anticipating a French occupation by a bare week (1788), while the old Dutch colony at the Cape was taken over and ultimately purchased to prevent it from falling into French hands (1795). Thus during the eighteenth century enormous extensions of the British Empire were made as the result of war. But it will be noted, first, that these extensions were in every instance but the by-products of conflicts which originated in European complications; secondly, that in no case did Britain begin the conflicts, but was compelled by circumstances to participate; thirdly, that when Britain entered (usually belatedly and reluctantly) she never did so with any purpose of annexation; and, finally, that when she fought, she fought not with the natives, but with French and Spanish rivals.*

* This is true even of India, which at first sight might seem to be an exception. Of course it is a fact that, when the French power in India had been

But if Britain came out of this hundred years' struggle with the Bourbons established in indisputable command of the sea, and with her dominion firmly planted in Canada, Australia, South Africa, and India, she did not emerge wholly without disaster. She suffered, indeed, the irreparable calamity of the loss of her North American colonies. We shall have to note in the following section how and why the nascent democracy of the New England settlements came into conflict with the obscurantist oligarchy which still administered the mother-country. Here I wish to emphasise the fact that not all the heroism of Washington

broken, conflicts in which natives were involved took place. But, as Sir J. R. Seeley so effectively shows in his *Expansion of England,* these conflicts were of the nature of civil wars. For the armies led by British officers were invariably composed predominantly of sepoy or native troops. So that the so-called " conquest " of India has been really a domestic revolution carried through in the interests of order and good government by the native forces opposed to anarchy.

and his associates would have secured the victory of the colonists had it not been for the help which France and Spain, eager for revenge on Britain, sent with lavish hand across the sea. This schism of New from Old England was the Bourbon retaliation for the loss of Canada and India. But, all the same, it was a catastrophe of the first magnitude. It divided the Anglo-Saxon race into two sections, which remained not only permanently dissevered from one another, but for a century alienated by mutual hostility, sundered by fiery memories of wrongs inflicted and endured. It weakened the cause of ordered liberty in the world by breaking into fragments the foundation on which best it could have been built—viz., the polity of those peoples whose priceless inheritance was the English common law. It retarded the advance of constitutional democracy by involving in wayside brawls the kindred nations who were its natural exponents and exemplars among men. It left the pioneership of

progress to pass to revolutionaries, and it allowed the championship of order to fall into the hands of reactionaries. The penalty which the world has had to pay for the unhappy disruption of the Anglo-Saxon race with its genius for popular self-government has been the growth on the one side of that militarism which culminated in the German War of 1914, and on the other side of that indiscipline which at the present moment in all countries threatens the still more deadly social revolution. If only the Anglo-Saxon race had remained united it would by this date have formed by itself a League of Nations under whose protection the peace and prosperity of the earth would have been secure.

Another result of the War of American Independence, with its galling heritage of humiliating memory and crushing debt, was that the British people developed a pronounced distaste for overseas dominions. They accepted the dictum of Turgot that colonies are like fruit which when ripe

inevitably falls off from the parent tree. They came to doubt whether an empire was at any time worth having; they began to regard distant dependencies as sources of danger and expense; they adopted the view expressed by a prominent official of the Colonial Office that one of the prime duties of his department was to arrange that the operation of severance, when it could no longer be postponed, should be effected without bloodshed. It was in this atmosphere of distrust, amid these conditions of disillusionment, and in these circumstances of indifference or positive dislike, that the second British Empire developed.

The active principle which lay behind the administration of the first British Empire had been that colonies were estates to be worked for the benefit of the mother-country. This was not so iniquitous a principle as it might at first sight appear to be. For if it meant on the one side restriction and oppressive regulation, it meant also on the other side development

and defence. Nevertheless, it had involved in the case of the American settlements quite intolerable limitations of the liberties of political self-government and economic self-realisation: Charters determined colonial constitutions; Navigation Acts required all imports to be procured from England and most exports to be sent to England; various Trade Acts prevented the setting up in the dominions of industries which conflicted with the staple manufactures of the mother-country. Behind all the specific grievances, such as Stamp Acts and Import Duties Acts which caused the revolt of the American colonies, lay the dominating consciousness that under the old mercantile system of political and economic exploitation no effective development of civic institutions or natural resources was possible.

The active principle which lay behind the non-administration of the second British Empire was *laissez-faire*. Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations*—written during the

ten years of controversy between New and Old England (1766–76), and published in the very year of the Declaration of Independence—had attacked the whole system of mercantile regulation, and on economic grounds had demonstrated its irrationality beyond dispute. The sequel to the War of Independence (1776–83) seemed equally conclusively to prove its political futility. Hence for a hundred years (1783–1883) the general attitude of the British government towards overseas dominions was one of non-interference, unfriendliness, neglect. What it asked before all things was that it should not be bothered. It tried to evade responsibility for colonial activities which caused international friction; it discountenanced new enterprises; it frequently declined to accept new territories whose inhabitants wished to be included within the British peace; occasionally, and with manifest relief, it managed to disburden itself of regions (*e.g.*, the Ionian Islands) over which it had unwil-

lingly been compelled to assume control. Both the words and the deeds of leading British statesmen indicated the same dislike of empire and the same desire for disburdenment. A committee of the House of Commons recommended the abandonment of the West Indies; a permanent secretary of state advocated the severance of the connection with Canada; Lord Thring drafted a general bill for cutting the colonies adrift; Cobden and the Manchester School formed a "Little England" party, whose antipathy to empire was pronounced; even their pungent opponent, Disraeli, in a fit of irritation, burst forth respecting one particular group of dominions with the remark: "These wretched colonies are a millstone round our necks."*

This antipathy, aloofness, and neglect—galling though it was to colonial governors, and exasperating as it occasionally became to zealous pioneers—was, as a matter of

* For the details of the circumstances, see Iwan-Müller's *Lord Milner and South Africa*, p. 79.

fact, eminently conducive to progress and expansion. It reproduced artificially in changed circumstances the conditions under which the first British Empire had sprung spontaneously into existence in those early days of adventure and romance before prosperity had provoked interference. A new era of rapid development began. A certain number of fresh territories passed in one way or another into British occupation or under British protection; for example, Malta (1800), Heligoland (1807-90), Aden (1839), Cyprus (1878), Egypt (1882). But acquisition was not the characteristic feature of the period. It was the development of dominions already held that was the remarkable phenomenon of the time. The eastern river-settlements of Quebec and Ontario which constituted the whole of eighteenth-century Canada were supplemented by new establishments until finally the great provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia, linked the Atlantic with the Pacific, and

opened up the resources of a virgin continent. The little coast-stations of New South Wales, which, till about 1813, comprised all of Australia that the British actually held, were reinforced by vast sheep-farms and mining-camps until ultimately Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria, and South Australia, covered, together with New South Wales, the whole of the island-continent. In Africa to the original Dutch naval station at the Cape were gradually added the settlement at Port Elizabeth and, as a consequence of Boer treks, the new administrative districts of Natal, Orange River, and Transvaal; to which later were appended the vast territories of Bechuanaland and Rhodesia. In India, after the defeat of the French attempt to establish a hegemony, circumstances compelled the East India Company and the British Government, with genuine reluctance, to undertake in one native state after another the task of political control. First the Carnatic, where the issue with the

French had been fought out, was restored to tranquillity under the English protection. Secondly, Bengal, where the Francophile nawab Surajah Dowlah had perpetrated the horror of the Black Hole of Calcutta and had brought upon himself the consequent destruction of Plassey, fell into English hands and there remained, in spite of desperate efforts on the part of the East India Company to divest itself of the tremendous responsibility. Next the four great continental powers of India—Oudh and the Deccan by treaty, Mysore and the Mahratta Confederacy after hard fighting engendered by French intrigue and by unprovoked attack upon the Company's preserves—passed within the circle of British authority. Finally the warlike frontier tribes, as the result of incessant raids upon the peaceful plains, and because of the new peril of Russian propaganda, had to be reduced to submission. But, be it repeated, nearly all of this steady advance from the south-eastern seaboard to the north-

western mountain-frontier was effected in accordance with the ardent desire of the natives, who found in the strong yet equitable British rule their best security against rapine and civil war. Further, be it remembered that when fighting had to take place (as in Mysore, the Central Provinces, or the Punjab) native troops formed on the average four-fifths of the armies which fought for the good of India under the British flag. The British never conquered India, and were never in a position to conquer India. They have ruled India through a mere handful of officials, supported by bodies of white troops so small as to be, by themselves, insufficient for the scantiest police duty. The whole European population of India is but $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the enormous total. To talk of the coercion of the $99\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. by this insignificant and constantly fluctuating fraction would be absurd. The British rule was welcomed because it brought peace and justice to a continent of mixed

peoples and irreconcilable religions among whom violence had been incessant and law unknown. The British rule has been acknowledged and supported because under it India has enjoyed a tranquillity and a prosperity unparalleled in all its long and varied annals. It is a popular rule; it is generally recognised as a beneficent and unselfish rule; it is a humanitarian and equitable rule. The only serious objection to it is that it has so completely freed India from plague, pestilence, and famine, from battle, murder, and sudden death, that it has removed the only check which (in the absence of self-restraint) kept population within the limits of a tolerable increase. But this is an objection which philanthropists find it hard to press, and there are none who desire the British to depart from India, save a handful of Brahmins who regret their own lost ascendancy and desire a return of the anarchy from which it was the work of the British to save their unhappy land.

The close of this century of vast internal development (1783–1883) saw changes in world-politics which had a profound effect upon both the British Empire and the British democracy. The unification of Germany by force made militarism dominant upon the European continent; the rush of the new Germany for overseas dominions started an international scramble for the unoccupied regions of the world which led Britain to reconsider her estimate of such portions of the earth as she already possessed; the rise of a new mercantilism with high protective tariffs and cut-throat competition caused a new value to accrue to markets under the national flag whence exclusion was not to be feared. Thus the Empire came to be regarded in a new light—not as fruit which when ripe must drop off; not as a millstone round the neck of the mother-country; not as an entanglement from which deliverance should be sought; but as a family of daughter-nations which ought to be attached by ties of eternal

affection to the parent stock, and as a group of natural allies whose resources and whose strength, if combined with those of Britain herself, could make the whole impregnably secure, both politically and economically, "against the envy of less happier lands." The new view of empire was expressed with matchless eloquence and with commanding authority by J. R. Seeley in his lectures on *The Expansion of England*, delivered in 1883. Next year the Imperial Federation League was founded in order to further and popularise the policy of a closer and more vital union between the various parts of the British dominions.

The task of the Imperial Federation League proved to be one unexpectedly difficult to accomplish. On the one hand the apathy of the British electorate could but slowly be stirred to interest and enthusiasm; on the other hand the fear of colonial statesmen that federation would mean loss of freedom could but gradually be allayed. Moreover, the real obstacles to any form of

centralisation were (and are) formidable enough: the distances which divide the constituent members of the Empire from one another are immense, even in these days of steam, petrol, and electricity; diversities of race, language, religion, political capacity are profound; divergencies of economic and other interests are many and irreconcilable. Hence problems of tariffs, of immigration laws, of modes of defence, of foreign policy, tended (and tend) to sunder the dominions and dependencies into conflicting groups or to keep some of them apart in angry isolation.

The proposals of the Imperial Federation League—which leaned rather unduly towards the creation of a unitary state in which overseas representatives would be merged and lost in the existing parliament at Westminster—met with little favour either at home or abroad, and in 1893 the League suspended operations. But its main purpose—viz., the strengthening of the bonds which held together the mother-

country and the dominions—was not allowed to lapse. The disturbed state of world-politics, indeed, made close collaboration between all parts of the Empire essential. Imperial Conferences, inaugurated in the year of Queen Victoria's jubilee, met from time to time and became increasingly important; in 1907 a regular four-year period was fixed, and a permanent secretariat was appointed. A Committee of Imperial Defence, independent of party politics, was instituted by Lord Salisbury when he was Prime Minister, and was perpetuated by his successors in that office. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, as the common court of final appeal for the whole Empire, came to deal with an increasing mass of business, and in dealing with it to impress upon the diverse legal systems of the dominions the unity and simplicity of the English common law. But all this accumulating machinery of conference and co-operation, useful as it was, left unsolved two problems which lay at the base of all

the difficulties which had impeded the full realisation of imperial federation. These problems were: (1) How can the dominions and dependencies be given an effective share in the control of foreign policy? (2) How can the dominions and dependencies be induced to pay an equitable portion of the expenses of imperial defence? These problems had not been solved, or even fairly faced, when the war of 1914 burst upon the world, and there can be no doubt that one of the circumstances which encouraged the Germans to embark upon their criminal adventure was a knowledge that the British Empire was weak in its defences, and a belief that the daughter-nations, who were under no formal obligation to come to the help of the mother-country, would break away in independence rather than be drawn into a European war. The event belied their over-clever and too-confident anticipations. The magnitude of the German peril, the deadly menace to democracy all the world over, the horror excited by

Teutonic barbarities in war, brought every member of the Empire in splendid loyalty to the side of Britain in the field. The comradeship engendered in conflict, in suffering, and in victory has happily given a consciousness of community stronger and more vivid than has ever existed before. How can that sense of kinship and mutual interest be so used as to pave the way to a settlement of that problem which the Imperial Federation League and the Colonial Conferences failed to solve? That is the question of the moment.

SECTION III

BRITISH AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

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THERE can be no doubt that of all the barriers to an effective federal union of the Empire the most formidable has been, and is, the great diversity in civilisation and in political development among the constituent members. The separation due to geographical distance is capable of much mitigation by improvement in means of communication. The alienation which flows from a clash of economic interests can be relieved by compromise or removed by counteracting advantages. But radical differences in culture, humanity, and civic development are immeasurably more difficult to deal with. Yet their elimination is essential if a real and permanent union is to be attained. There can be no enduring bond between partners too unequally yoked together. Democracy is firmly

established in both Britain and the Great Dominions. Only on a democratic basis can the Empire be federated, or a League of Nations constituted. The prospects of democracy in the world at large lie outside the scope of the present enquiry. The prospects of democracy in the British Empire is its restricted but still enormous theme.

The seventy or so units which compose the British Empire may be classified into five main groups—viz., (1) the kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; (2) the self-governing dominions: Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa; (3) colonies with representative institutions, such as the majority of the West Indian islands; (4) Crown colonies, as, for example, Gibraltar under the War Office, St. Helena under the Colonial Office, and Ascension Island (rated as a ship) under the Admiralty; (5) dependencies and protectorates, among which rank such old and important regions as India and

Egypt and such new and undeveloped territories as Zanzibar and Uganda. The members of these five groups represent almost every stage of political development known to social science. They range from primitive tribal autocracies, through various types of oligarchy, to the most advanced forms of republican ochlocracy. Moreover, but few of them are stationary. Although here and there, especially in the tropics, some seem to have reached a stage of evolution which, while rudimentary, is yet final; and although others have positively retrograded; nevertheless, generally, movement is evident, and movement in one direction. It is movement from monarchy, by way of aristocracy, towards democracy—that is to say, a tendency to escape from the unrestricted authority of the Crown or its representative, and gradually to advance along the path that ends in entire self-government. This movement in its completest realisation is excellently exemplified in the case of Canada: in 1760

Canada was conquered from the French, and for fourteen years was administered under martial law; in 1774 civilian rule was substituted, but still the Crown reigned supreme; in 1791 a notable Act of William Pitt the younger conceded representative institutions, although the executive power in the colony continued to reside in the hands of ministers nominated by the home government; in 1840, as a result of the great report of Lord Durham, full responsible administration was granted—that is to say, Canada was allowed to appoint its own cabinet and to control it by means of its own legislature; in 1867 a further step was taken by the establishment of a federal form of constitution in place of the unitary organisation which had worked badly because of the vast area of the great dominion. But Canada, although a pioneer among modern colonies, was in treading this democratic path but following the lead which had been given to her by first the mother-country of Great Britain,

and secondly the elder sister-colonies of that North American group of settlements which had constituted the strength and glory of the first British Empire.

The English Constitution in the period following the Norman Conquest was emphatically monarchic in character. William I., as the result of the Battle of Hastings and the six succeeding years of struggle, acquired a kingdom which had been reduced to anarchy by the weakness of Edward the Confessor, the lawlessness of the great nobles, the insubordination of the clergy, and the turbulence of the common people. With clear sight and strong will he set himself to establish a royal authority which should be supreme over all rivals. He made the Church his ally by restoring it to the communion and obedience of Rome; he won the conquered English to his side by the justice and impartiality of his vigorous rule; he ruthlessly crushed the barons, irrespective of rank and race, when they rebelled against him, and sought

to found in England feudal franchises similar to the great fiefs of the Continent. His firm, efficient autocracy was a necessity of the times, and the country as a whole acquiesced without grave demur in the diminution of its immemorial Anglo-Saxon liberties, because under the new monarchy an order and a security were conferred which had been long unknown in the land. The sons of the Conqueror continued his policy: William II. with less public spirit, less piety, less humanity, less generosity than his father; but Henry I., the "Lion of Justice," with an even larger sense of the urgency of his task and the sacredness of his duty. Under Stephen, as under Edward the Confessor, the bonds of discipline were relaxed, and the English people were made to feel that liberty without law to limit it on the one hand and protect it on the other is a curse incomparably greater than the most grinding despotism. Henry II. followed the feckless Stephen as the restless and terrible restorer of order

and authority. His energetic measures not only effected their purpose, but went so far beyond it in centralising the government, reducing baronial privileges, restricting clerical immunities, and invading local franchises, that when his strong hand was removed and his unpopular younger son John was on the throne, a general revolt of the three great classes of medieval society —nobles, clergy, commons—brought the royal autocracy to an end.

The sealing of Magna Carta by John marks the transition in English history from monarchic to aristocratic rule. Whether John, if he had lived, could have recovered his forfeited authority is a problem which must for ever remain in doubt. What is certain is that his death in the year following his humiliation left the baronage in undisputed possession of the administration. It was fortunate for the country that the minority of Henry III. was passed under the tutelage of nobles so highminded and patriotic as William Marshal and

Hubert de Burgh, and it was still more happy that when Henry grew up and tried to throw off the shackles which the charter and the council placed upon his autocracy, so disinterested a champion of constitutional rule as Simon de Montfort should have been available to lead the baronial opposition. Edward I., son of Henry III., but pupil of Simon de Montfort, recognised frankly and honourably that his monarchy was a limited one, and that he ruled but as the dominant partner in a representative aristocracy. His keen and legal mind, wishing to regularise and define the situation, determined the constitution of the House of Lords, created the oligarchic House of Commons, and generally settled that framework of government which remained substantially unchanged all through the remainder of the Middle Ages and far into modern times. The ascendancy of the baronage—with which the higher clergy became ever more closely associated—continued to grow, fostered as it was by the

frequent wars in France and by the mistaken royal policy of intermarriage with the more formidable of the noble houses, until it culminated in the lawless orgies of the fifteenth century and he suicidal conflict of the Wars of the Roses.

The fortunate fact that the feudal nobility almost exterminated itself during the thirty years' frenzy of the Lancastrian and Yorkist struggle gave the Tudor monarchs the opportunity, of which they were quick to avail themselves, to restore the balance of the constitution. They executed the few dangerous survivors of the old nobility, they destroyed the overweening power and confiscated the excessive possessions of the baronial clergy, they established what looked like a permanent despotism, but was really a temporary dictatorship "broad based upon the people's will." Their strength lay in the fact that they were doing work, difficult and perilous, which, in the national interest, urgently needed to be done. They were creating order out of

anarchy, political independence out of ecclesiastical subjection, commercial prosperity out of economic ruin. They had the firm support of the vital and progressive elements in the nation while they were suppressing livery and maintenance, were hanging rogues and vagabonds, were dissolving obsolete monasteries, were building a strong navy, and were defying and defeating Spain. But they never had, or attempted to get, a standing army; their power lay in their patriotism and their popularity.

The very conditions of their success prepared the way for the discomfiture of the Stuarts, who followed them in changed circumstances, when the perils of the Middle Ages had passed away and when the prospects of the modern world were bright. The order and security which the Tudors had restored, the sense of safety from foreign foes and the consciousness of strength which their skilful maintenance of the balance of power had conferred upon the nation, had fostered a spirit of inde-

pendence in both people and parliament. A new and vigorous middle class of merchants and financiers had sprung up in the great towns; a large and opinionative body of yeoman farmers had developed upon the erstwhile feudal and monastic estates in the country; a Protestant nobility, parvenu and proud, were ready to take the lead in resistance to royal encroachments; above all a Puritan spirit, strong in the passion of individual liberty, had permeated the masses of the people and prepared the way for the reassertion of ancient rights.

That England became the pioneer in the great democratic advance of modern times was due to a variety of causes. First, she was favoured by geographical situation: her insularity, fortified by her fleet, gave her an immunity from molestation which enabled her to make experiments and run risks such as no continental state dare face. Secondly, she was inhabited by a hardy race, compounded from many sturdy sources, heirs of many diverse traditions of

freedom, kept at a high level of physical fitness and moral energy by a climate stern, yet not cruel, and a soil not niggardly, yet calling for diligent cultivation. Thirdly, thanks alike to her comparative exemption from invasion and to the sustained vigour and pertinacity of her people, she had managed to preserve many more of her primitive organs of self-government than had any continental nation; and, further, she had succeeded in grafting new ones upon them. Thus, throughout the Middle Ages her hundred courts and shire courts, with their representative reeves and best men, had continued to meet; borough courts had sprung up, and by charter had secured large rights of self-adjudication; merchant guilds had been organised in which commerce had been regulated and the affairs of the trading community determined; craft guilds had soon followed whereby the business of the separate industries had been controlled and the interests of the artificers (both masters and

men) safeguarded. As commerce expanded and manufacture developed, the medieval guilds of the larger cities—especially those of London, Bristol, Norwich, York, and Newcastle—enlarged their scope and became extensive self-governing corporations, or merchant companies, having wide connections throughout England and beyond the seas. Such were the company of the staplers and the merchant venturers. It was these powerful and highly organised bodies that were ready, when the geographical discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries prepared the way, to equip argosies, to finance explorers, and to undertake the burden of founding colonies.

Here, indeed, were numerous and effective schools of self-government. The men who in the seventeenth century challenged the Stuart autocracy and claimed that place in the administration of the country from which the feudal aristocracy had been driven were men who had had long and hereditary experience in the

democratic business of county or borough court, of quarter and petty sessions, of merchant company or committee of plantations. They were accustomed to work together; they were habituated to methods of election and debate; they were familiar with responsibility; they knew the world. Hence, when they came together in parliament and council chamber; when they felt called upon to uphold in argument the cause of the common law; when they found themselves compelled to oppose the executive, to raise armies, to wage war, and ultimately to administer the kingdom, they rose with easy mastery to the height of the tremendous occasion and established a constitution independent of the king. If constitutional government triumphed over autocracy in Stuart England, it was largely because its champions had had so long and thorough a schooling in public affairs; and if constitutional government failed disastrously in eighteenth-century France, in nineteenth-

century Germany, and in twentieth-century Russia, its failure was due primarily to the fact that it called to the conduct of high politics people whose elementary civic education had been neglected—people who did not know one another, who had no experience in meeting and discussion, to whom responsibility was foreign, and in whom practical wisdom was wanting. The English genius for self-government was no mysterious heaven-sent gift. It was a capacity trained by many generations of laborious experience in lowly spheres before it was called upon to display itself upon the large stage of national politics.

When the clash between King and Parliament came in the seventeenth century, a good deal of democratic doctrine was generated which had a powerful influence during all the succeeding centuries in starting and stimulating popular activity all the world over. Some of the doctrine was recovered by scholars from ancient wells of political ideas. Stoic philosophy

provided teaching concerning the natural equality of men which was a potent solvent of artificial distinctions of rank, and an acid destroyer of pretensions based on titles and dignities; Roman law clearly proclaimed that the prerogatives of the prince, however imperial and absolute, were derived from the inherent and ultimate sovereignty of the people; Christian theology not only taught a brotherhood of man which verged upon communism, but also displayed in the turbulent history of the peculiar people of the Old Testament several inspiring examples of rebellion and regicide. But if some of the doctrine was old, much of it was new and strange. All kinds of fables were drawn upon, all sorts of fancies were exploited, all manner of theories were invented, to justify resistance to authority, to warrant repudiation of monarchy, to sanction the setting up of a republican régime. But the arguments of the leaders of the popular party more and

more concentrated themselves upon the doctrine of the "original contract," a supposed primeval pact which bound rulers and subjects together by a tie of mutual obligation, obedience on the one side being conditional upon good government and efficient administration on the other. In vain did Hobbes, in the interest of the menaced sovereignty, try to turn the edge of this formidable theory, and to use it as a defence of the great Leviathan whom he adored as his sole security in a hostile world. The special pleadings of Hobbes were countered by Locke, and when the Stuarts were finally expelled the new constitutional monarchy of William of Orange was formally founded upon the doctrine of the contract and the Declaration of Right.

The constitutional experiments of the Commonwealth did not succeed; nor did the democratic doctrines of the period immediately bear fruit. The eighteenth century, with its international wars, its

economic upheavals, its religious revolutions, and its intellectual unrest, was not an age favourable to democratic control. Moreover, the proletariat of the seventeenth century had shown itself so entirely unfitted to govern itself, that the term of its apprenticeship had to be prolonged. Hence, the heritage of the Great Rebellion and the Glorious Revolution passed into the keeping of the Whig oligarchy of large landowners, high financiers, wealthy merchants, and constitutional lawyers. But the Whigs, although for three generations they monopolised power, were definitely and admittedly in the position of trustees. If they held vast estates, they held them in the interests of their tenants; if they contracted large fortunes, they controlled them as public executors; if they sat in Parliament as members for pocket boroughs, as soon as they took their seats they represented not merely their exiguous constituencies but the whole British Empire. No doubt this theory

of trusteeship was sometimes hard to harmonise with the hard facts of selfish enjoyment of privilege and gross abuse of power: fraudulent trustees unfortunately are not unknown. But it was something—it was, indeed, much—to have general recognition of a theory which placed the Whig oligarchy in a position of responsibility as clearly defined as that of the contractual king of the earlier day; a theory which marked out Whig administration as merely provisional—an interim government valid only during the minority of the sovereign people; a guardianship to be terminated as soon as the democracy should come of age.

The growth of the British democracy during this eighteenth century of tutelage was fostered and stimulated by three great movements—one in England itself, one in America, one in France—to each of which the term "revolution" has been applied. The so-called Industrial Revolution, which converted England from a

country dominantly agricultural into a country wherein manufacture held primacy, operated by concentrating masses of artisans in industrial centres, by causing them to organise themselves in friendly societies and incipient unions, by giving them opportunities and occasions for meeting, discussion, and debate. The American Revolution, which was precipitated by disputes respecting constitutional rights of taxation and representation, led to vehement argument and gave rise to a voluminous literature. The speeches of Benjamin Franklin, the pamphlets of Thomas Paine, the reasoned political discourses of Alexander Hamilton and the other writers of the *Federalist,* all proved to be as full of education and stimulus for the British proletariat as for those to whom they were primarily addressed. The theory of popular sovereignty; the doctrine of the separation of powers; the principle of majority rule; the problem of the franchise; the canons of equitable taxation;

the rights of man; the indefeasible claim of the individual to life, liberty, property, and religious freedom—these and countless other kindred themes were widely canvassed, and, although much of the discussion was wild and nonsensical, the net result was a profound deepening of the popular interest in politics and an extensive dissemination of radical ideas. The French Revolution was in some degree a sequel to the American Revolution. For in no country was American republican literature read with more avidity than in France. The Bourbon Court, in its eagerness to be avenged on Britain for the losses and humiliations which it had suffered during the Seven Years' War, took up the cause of the revolted colonies, welcomed their representatives, disseminated their propaganda. It is difficult to decide whether the tragic or the comic element is dominant in the spectacle of Beaumarchais or Marie Antoinette engaged in distributing tracts which, though directed primarily

against the rule of George III. in New England, were quite general in their revolutionary republicanism, and were obviously as fully effective against Bourbon autocracy in France as against Hanoverian despotism in America. Certain it is that the doctrine and example of America were as seed that fell into ground already well prepared and richly fertilised by Rousseau and Voltaire, and that this helped to produce the crop of 1789. The French Revolution had, of course, powerful repercussions both in America and in Britain. America, being far away and in no peril, and clearly recognising the kinship of the Gallic rising to its own, was sympathetic and enthusiastic from the first, and all along. Britain, on the other hand, being near and in serious danger, adopted in general the attitude of Burke and through a whole generation of strife reprobated and condemned the revolution. But even during this reactionary period, which culminated in an Anglo-American war, a minority in

Britain (led by Charles James Fox) took the Franco-American side and deplored the policy of Pitt and George III.; and, as soon as the panic caused by the "reign of terror" and by the menaces of Napoleonic invasion had passed away, the defenders of democracy and advocates of reform took courage, renewed their propaganda, and found that silently but universally the ferment of the revolution had prepared the people for the final and victorious advance.

It is unnecessary to say much here of the triumph of democracy in Britain during the nineteenth century. The story has often been told, and it is well known.*

The first Reform Act (1832) broke down the barriers within which the rival yet conjoined aristocracies of Whig and Tory magnates had entrenched themselves; it eliminated the pocket boroughs and ad-

* Convenient summaries are to be found in G. L. Dickinson's *Development of Parliament in the Nineteenth Century*, and J. H. Rose's *Rise of Democracy*.

mitted the middle class to a share of political power. The second Reform Act (1867) immensely widened the franchise, giving electoral rights to the masses of the urban artisans. The third Reform Act (1884) extended the urban franchise to the agricultural labourer. Finally, the Representation of the People Act (1918) took the decisive step of granting votes to women, though not quite on the same terms as to men. While this peaceful but none the less radical revolution was being effected by these four cardinal measures, many subsidiary reforms were being carried through. Vote by ballot, removal of religious disabilities, abolition of property qualifications, equalisation of electoral districts—these and a host of similar innovations were being introduced under the impulse of the now-dominant democratic spirit. It is not too much to say that at the beginning of the twentieth century the transition from feudal monarchy to popular government was complete. True, both

king and nobles remained within the constitution, not only recalling a venerable past, but still performing valuable functions. But the sovereign political authority had passed out of their hands, and ultimate power rested with an electorate of some eighteen millions of enfranchised citizens.

While the British democracy during the nineteenth century was moving with rapid steps towards supremacy, the American democracy, already secure in the possession of power, was developing along different and yet convergent lines. The people of the United States shared with those of England the inheritance of Saxon institutions, common law, Magna Carta, and the countless enactments of medieval and early modern times whereby the rights of the community had been protected from the encroachments of its ruler, and the rights of the individual from the encroachments of the community. Nevertheless, in spite of their common ancestry,

and notwithstanding their participation in the same tradition of liberty and law, the two peoples manifested striking contrasts in their constitutional evolution. The English constitution took shape as a concentration of local machinery. At the basis of the House of Commons lay the ancient communities of shire and borough, which from time immemorial had enjoyed certain prerogatives of self-government. The king had been accustomed to send round his ministers to county and to town to declare his wish and to ask for aids. The summoning of the Commons in the thirteenth century merely meant a reversal of the process: the counties and the towns sent each its two representatives to meet the king, hear from his own mouth his commands, and listen to his own request for a subsidy. Thus the English Parliament had behind it the tradition of the ancient local liberties of the realm. Not so the American Congress. It is, of course, true that the majority of the

early settlers went out from English towns and villages, and that many of them had had experience in the conduct of local affairs. But in emigrating they had perforce to sever their connection with their old homes, and to establish themselves in the New World as members of very different organisations. Their constitutional tradition went back to the medieval guilds, the merchant companies, the chartered corporations, the licensed and privileged confraternities of colonial adventurers.

Hence, some of the most conspicuous features of their distinctive form of government. First, they had a written constitution, while the British remained unwritten. No single document, and no collection of documents, however extensive, sets forth the principles according to which Britain is governed, or defines the powers possessed by the various organs of state. The British constitution has been a matter of slow growth; it has been subject to constant

change; practice has always been far ahead of theory; alterations take place informally and silently as pressure of necessity indicates. On the other hand, the American constitution is embodied in a single sacrosanct document, formulated in a specially called convention, and signed on September 17th, 1787. This document was modelled on those governing charters which had been bestowed on each of the thirteen colonies at the time of its foundation, and these in their day had been merely modifications of the old grants given by medieval kings to mercantile burgesses and citizens. Secondly, the American constitution was marked by a separation of powers between legislature, executive, and judiciary, wholly foreign to Britain. It is true that the acute and admiring Montesquieu, when he studied English institutions early in the eighteenth century, got the impression that he perceived this separation in the Hanoverian administration: his delineation of this imaginary

feature is one of the most impressive sections of his *Esprit des Lois*. But Montesquieu was deluding himself and his readers. There was no such separation in England. In the last resort the legislature was, and is, supreme both over ministry and bench. In the colonial administration, however, the separation had been real: it had been carried in many cases, indeed, to the length of a bitter and interminable feud. The colonial legislature was usually elected by the settlers; the executive was appointed by the Crown; the ultimate judicial authority lay with the Privy Council. Hence the constitution of 1787 merely stereotyped in new circumstances the awkward arrangements which had become familiar during the old colonial period. Thirdly, the power of the president, so much greater during the term of its continuance than that of the constitutional king, is the concentration of the authorities of the erstwhile governors. Finally, the formal

recognition of such "rights of man" as freedom of speech and liberty of worship is reminiscent of ancient privileges granted by royal favour, and venerable immunities confirmed under the great seal.

The British constitution and the American constitution are the two great types of democratic government at present existent in the world. The one is the cabinet system with its sovereign legislature and its flexible framework; the other is the presidential system with its separated powers and its rigid construction. It is not necessary to judge between them, or to say which is the better of the two. Each has its advantages, and each is the more exactly adapted to particular conditions. If the British people flatter themselves that for a unitary state such as theirs the cabinet system is preferable, they may well be free to admit that for a federal state such as America the cabinet system would be an impossibility, and that the only kind of constitution

compatible with any maintenance of "state rights" is that in which a formal and almost unalterable document reigns supreme.

SECTION IV

DEMOCRACY IN THE DOMINIONS

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The old colonial system under which the American settlements were planted, and subject to which they spent the first century of their existence, did not contemplate self-government. Although colonial legislatures were tolerated and even encouraged, their powers were restricted within the narrowest limits. Their resolutions could be rescinded or ignored by governors; even if accepted by them they could be disallowed by the home government. The assemblies served a useful purpose as debating societies; as means by which grievances could be ventilated and desires made known; as instruments with which pressure could be brought to bear upon the executive through the holding up of supplies: but of the

ultimate sovereignty they had no share. When, in the eighteenth century, the American colonists expressed profound dissatisfaction with this system, demanded self-determination, and declined to pay taxes for which they had not voted, the only suggestion for giving them the desired representation which seems to have occurred to Franklin and Jefferson on the one side, or to Burke and Adam Smith on the other side, was the assigning to them of a certain number of members in the Parliament of the United Kingdom. This proposal did not really solve, or even appreciably lessen, the difficulty; for any representatives who might have been sent from America would have been submerged and lost amid the masses of the members already sitting, and they could not conceivably have done much more for their constituents by either voice or vote than was already being done on their behalf by such doughty champions as Fox and the elder Pitt. Moreover, unsatisfactory as the proposal was, it was

also impracticable; for methods of communication were then so imperfect and so slow that it would have been impossible for the electors in the plantations, through the agency of delegates in England, to have exercised any effective control over the affairs of the Empire. Hence, the very hopelessness of the attempt to establish any sort of democratic constitution for Britain and the dominions as a whole made disruption seem to be the only alternative to dependence and degradation. Nay more, even after the American colonies had broken away, and, as the United States, had become independent, the conditions of overseas settlement remained so precisely the same that statesmen were forced to conclude that the making of a permanent empire of free peoples was in the nature of things an impossibility; that plantations of white citizens as soon as they become populous and self-sufficing must inevitably become autonomous; and that, therefore, as Lord Blatchford in his oft-quoted declaration

said, "the function of the Colonial Office is to secure that our connection, while it lasts, shall be as profitable to both parties, and our separation when it comes as amicable as possible."

In these circumstances it is not remarkable that, under the new colonial system of indifference and neglect, on the one hand no attention at all was devoted to methods by which the Empire could be retained, federated, and consolidated; and on the other hand the dominions were allowed to go their own ways, to make what experiments they liked in political machinery and social reform. They were all so soon to be independent states that it did not much matter what was conceded to them; the great thing was to avoid trouble and keep them contented! The Canadian crisis of 1837–40 showed that the most effective and enduring sedative for colonial growing-pains was the grant of responsible government. This sovereign remedy was therefore applied whenever an overseas com-

munity began to cry: it was administered to Canada in 1840, Australia in 1850, New Zealand in 1852, South Africa in 1872. So large and free, indeed, were the doses of self-determination that were bestowed that the colonies were allowed to do things which would normally have been regarded as marks of complete and even unfriendly sovereignty. They were allowed to regulate their own customs duties, to set up protective systems, to erect tariff walls even against the mother-country; they were permitted to fix their own rules of immigration, and to impose such conditions of entrance into their ports as excluded (and were intended to exclude), not only undesirable foreigners, but British subjects too; they were even left free to take part, or not to take part, in the common defence of the Empire—no money contribution was asked of them; no quota of men was required; no ships were demanded, and if they voluntarily provided them, they could either place them under the British command or retain

them under their own.* Indeed, the only clear restriction which the imperial administration placed upon the autonomy of the self-governing dominions lay in the sphere of foreign affairs: they were not allowed to have diplomatic representatives in the courts and capitals of the world; they had to conduct negotiations through the agency of the British Ministry; they had to run the risk of being involved in wars with which they had no immediate concern.†

The almost perfect independence granted by the home government to the dominions gave them a unique opportunity for democratic development. For if, on the one hand, they enjoyed the most extensive liberty of self-determination, on the other hand, they were in a position to make bold

* Thus in 1914 Canada furnished no ships; New Zealand added certain valuable vessels to the common British navy; Australia had a small navy of her own.

† Even this restriction had been challenged before the war, both in word and in deed, by, *e.g.*, Queensland, Cape Colony, and Canada. See *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (Macmillan, 1915).

experiments with the minimum of risk. First, they had the inestimable advantage of the *Pax Britannica*. Weak and vulnerable as they would have been in isolation, they were strong in the protective might of the Empire as a whole, and secure from the peril of external molestation. Thus they were able to concentrate both their attention and their resources upon domestic problems, without the distractions of those who are harassed by international complications. Secondly, they were for the most part geographically remote from the crowded and disturbed regions of the earth. Far away in the vast solitudes of the Pacific Ocean; or screened by the Atlantic, safeguarded by the great lakes, and sheltered by the barrier of the Rocky Mountains; or, again, shut off by limitless tracts of desert, forest, and fen from the seething cauldron of the decadent Mediterranean civilisations—here, in these new and large lands of hope and liberty, they were free to work out their destiny. Never

were stages so well set for the development of the drama of democratic government on a great scale. Thirdly, these new lands were regions of virgin and inexhaustible resources; their soil, possessed of all its pristine properties, produced joyful harvests such as Virgil never dreamed of; their mines, untouched since the creation of the world, were rich in precious ores; their prairies were quick with cattle, their waters with fishes, and their forests with fowl. In such treasuries of natural wealth many economic mistakes might be made without disaster, many social reforms tried that would involve ruin in old countries, many political risks run that would be reprehensible gambles amid the exhausted exchequers of Europe. Finally, their populations were scanty, so that their experiments, though national in name, were really but municipal in scale and scope. They were made with the same limitation of liability with which ventures are undertaken by an English borough council. New Zealand, for example,

has an area of 103,000 square miles as compared with the 90,000 square miles of Britain; but its population numbers only a little over one million, which is approximately that of Glasgow and but one-fifth of that of London. Hence to nationalise a railway in New Zealand means no more than to municipalise a tramway in the Scottish city, and to extend the franchise to women is as little of a revolution as to allow female ratepayers to vote in the English metropolis.

In conditions of opportunity and irresponsibility so favourable to innovation it is not wonderful, as has already been remarked, that many curious and interesting experiments in democratic government have been made by the colonial legislatures, full of instruction—and occasionally warning—to statesmen of the Old World. New Zealand and Australia have been particularly rich in these experiments; Canada and South Africa slightly less so, because in the one case the contiguity of the United

States imposes some restraint; and because in the other case the presence of hostile Dutch and swarming native populations necessitates caution. But in all the colonies alike there has been a singular freedom from the trammels of tradition. No venerable vested interests have barred the way of progress; no ancient sanctities have called in emotion to check the activities of reason; no established church has derogated from religious equality; no hereditary aristocracy has claimed social pre-eminence or political privilege; no feudal system has tied up the land in entailed seignories. The original emigrants and settlers, no doubt, were drawn from all classes in the mother-country, but the class distinctions of Britain soon melted away in the strong equalitarian air of the dominions. The young scion of nobility, when he went to rear sheep in Australia, to dig gold in South Africa, or to clear forest-land in Canada, soon found that he was estimated in terms of labour-value by his new associates, and not at all

by the colour of his blood. On the other hand, the submerged proletarian who escaped from the slums of an English city in order to seek a new way of life found his former degradation disregarded, and realised that upon his personal qualities alone depended his advance in his colonial career. Thus extremes of high and low are lacking in the dominions. Such class distinctions as exist are of novel generation and are economic in origin; they are the distinctions which inevitably arise in any society of co-operative men—differentiations due to natural diversities of ability and character, or to accidental influences of fate and fortune. Rich are divided from poor, educated from illiterate, soft-handed workers from manual labourers, bourgeoisie from proletariat. Thus colonial politics are simpler than the politics of the mother-country, and the lines of cleavage which divide the democratic electorates of the dominions are economic rather than constitutional.

Social and economic experiments are, therefore, the novelties in colonial administration which seem to claim first attention. Speaking generally, we may say that collectivism prevails over individualism; that the community as a whole through its governments, central and local, develops and controls many industries and much commerce which in the Old World have been left to the enterprise of private persons. The land, being originally unappropriated, has been kept much more completely in public hands than has been possible in countries where feudal tenures have established themselves; its unearned increments are used for the benefit of the societies among whom they have accrued; its undeserved decrements, as is proper in the circumstances, are made good out of public funds. Railways—which in Britain owe their inception and marvellous progress entirely to the pioneer activity of inventors unaided by the state, and capitalists who ventured their all—have from the first been

financed and controlled by public authority. Tramways also, even more universally than in the mother-country, where municipal provision has become general, are regarded as falling within the proper sphere of local administration. Canals and docks have generally been constructed under the auspices of the community and not by companies of speculators. Such services as those of water, gas, and electricity are rarely, if ever, allowed to be run to private profit. In some cases, particularly in Australasia, beyond the normal limits of collective enterprise, commerce is undertaken by the Government, which accumulates commodities, secures orders, provides steamers, makes delivery, and reaps the mercantile reward.

Sometimes these multifarious activities of the organised community carried on by means of its governmental agents are described by the term "socialism" or, more exactly, "state-socialism." There could not be a more unfortunate misnomer. For between collectivism, as illustrated in

colonial enterprise, and socialism there is no necessary connection at all; and nothing but hopeless confusion of thought occurs if the two terms are used as though they connoted the same thing. Socialism is an ethical and economic creed: it embodies doctrines, eminently controversial in character, concerning rights of property, distribution of wealth, factors of production, and principles of exchange; it advocates the nationalisation of land, the expropriation of capital, the bestowal of all the proceeds of industry upon labour. Collectivism, on the other hand, is merely an administrative and industrial device—it is a matter not of principle but of expediency. Will it be wiser for the community, through its accredited agents, to establish and control railways, tramways, canals, docks, and the rest; or shall these enterprises be left to the initiative of private contractors who shall be free to appropriate any profit that may be made, and compelled to bear any loss that may be incurred? The fact

that confusion has taken place between things so utterly diverse and distinct as socialism and collectivism is no doubt historically explicable. Karl Marx wanted to use collectivist machinery to carry into effect socialist designs; the English Fabians wished to place the collectivist state in permanent control of the confiscated lands and the decapitalised industries of the old order. But this association between socialism and collectivism is purely fortuitous and temporary. It is, indeed, already repudiated by both the leading champions of the state and the vanguard of progressive socialism: the former are reverting to the advocacy of individual liberty safeguarded by law; the latter have definitely advanced to the assertion of the principle of "direct action" in defiance of political authority.

But though this wide economic activity on the part of colonial governments is not properly called socialism, it nevertheless carries with it that constant intervention of the state in industrial affairs which

socialist-labour parties have hitherto concurred in urging. The problem of strikes has naturally attracted much attention: for it seems peculiarly monstrous that the employees of a democratic community, engaged in public works of a national character, should desert their posts, lay down their tools, and refuse to render the service which they owe to their fellows. A strike of public servants is the very negation of collectivism; it is the triumph of unreason and the wild recrudescence of anarchic individualism. Australia, feeling this, has made the experiment of compulsory arbitration. Sir Charles Wade in his interesting *Australian Problems and Prospects* has given a valuable and detailed account of the experiment. According to his narrative of events it has not been a success. Again and again the Government has intervened both in disputes between its own servants and the departmental officials under whose direction they were working, and in disputes between private employers

and their men. Again and again courts have been set up, cases adjudged, decisions given. But again and again the awards have been ignored or flouted by violent and unreasonable men, and in such circumstances they have been turned into ridicule. For the fatal defect in the whole institution is the absence of any executive power to make the award effective. The rebel against authority remains the rebel still, and there is nowhere any might capable of reducing him to obedience.

Another experiment which has been made—in this case with a view to the maintenance of a decent standard of life for the low-grade and unskilled labourer—is the recognition of the principle of the minimum wage. Of the excellence of the principle in the abstract there can be no question: the labourer is worthy of his hire, and everyone who toils should be able in return to keep himself and his dependents in comfort. But in practice the recognition of the principle involves assumptions which

are by no means always fulfilled; it assumes that an honest day's work will be given in response to the standardised wage; and it assumes that added efficiency and self-respect will so increase output that the increased wages will not result in enhanced prices and a general rise in the cost of living. In Australia these assumptions have unhappily proved to be too optimistic: the minimum wage has encouraged idleness and incompetence; output has dwindled; prices have risen; and the last state of the unfaithful and inefficient labourer has become no better than the first.

Closely akin to the establishment of the minimum wage has been the granting of unemployment doles and the founding of labour settlements. In these experiments New South Wales has taken the lead: Mr. H. de R. Walker has described and discussed them in his *Australian Democracy*. They have been profoundly disappointing. Nothing would seem to be juster or more desirable than that a workman who has

fallen on evil days, whether through sickness or through the fluctuations of the market, should, without having to incur the stigma of pauperism, receive aid, either in the form of work or in the shape of money, to tide him over the crisis and restore him to productive citizenship. But, unhappily, mingled with the honest and deserving workmen whose unemployment is genuine and whose case is worthy of all commiseration, are others, and a majority, of loungers whose laziness is incurable, of spongers whose mean spirit sees no disgrace in parasitism, of drunkards and fornicators whose vices have incapacitated them for service, of reprobates and scoundrels whose malignant hostility is directed against the community upon which they prey. It is the presence of these lost souls that renders the problem of unemployment so hard of solution. It is their numbers in New South Wales that has swollen the doles to gigantic dimensions, and has reduced the labour colonies to hotbeds of criminal anarchy.

Old-age pensions were first voted in New Zealand in 1898: they were to be granted to citizens of sixty-five years and over; they were non-contributory in character; they provided for the pensioners £18 per annum. The example of New Zealand was followed by New South Wales, by Victoria, and finally by the Australian Commonwealth as a whole. The abuses of the old-age pension schemes have not been so glaring as have been the abuses connected with the minimum wage and the unemployment doles. It is not so easy for a person to practice fraud in respect of his antiquity as it is to do so in respect of his occupation. Nevertheless here, as has been the case in Britain, the amount of money required to finance the schemes has been far in excess of all estimates. When the British Pensions Act was passed in 1908 the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Asquith) assured the House of Commons that it would never cost the country more than £6,000,000 a year: the cost is

now £26,000,000, and it is constantly rising. Similarly in Australia estimates have been far exceeded; but population is small, resources are large, and the false calculations have not the serious import which they possess in the mother-country.

So much for the social and economic adventures of the overseas dominions. When we turn to their political experiments we find them not less interesting and instructive. They have all been directed towards the realisation of ideal democracy. For in the absence of conservative aristocracies, established hierarchies, and vested interests generally, all political parties have been progressive. Toryism, if represented in any degree, has been negligible: such differences as have existed have been differences between individualist radicals of the middle class whose watchword has been personal liberty, and collectivist socialists of the labouring class whose watchword has been communal control. Both groups have agreed in laudation of popular

government, and have vied with one another in promoting measures intended to make the general will more rapidly and easily effective. This eager rivalry in reform has operated all the more speedily because of the instability which has characterised colonial ministries. Since, owing to the lack of the elements of conservatism, political parties have not, except in Canada, been able to organise themselves on the lines familiar in Britain, fluctuating groups have come into existence resembling those of the continent of Europe. The kaleidoscopic permutations and combinations of these ephemeral associations have resulted in the formation of coalition governments which have passed like "transient and embarrassed phantoms" across the stage of office. The record has, I think, been achieved by South Australia, where in the closing forty years of the nineteenth century forty-two ministries followed one another in spasmodic succession. The effect has been that the passing politicians

on their swift progress towards oblivion have clutched at any straw that seemed to offer them a chance of a moment more of protagony, and such straws, when they have not been economic doles, have for the most part been constitutional reforms. If innovation be synonymous with progress, there is no doubt that the group system has advantages over the party system. For the successful rolling of logs it has no equal.

Extensions of the franchise and other parliamentary reforms have naturally occupied a foremost place in the programmes of colonial progressives. Manhood suffrage was established almost from the first. Many of the pioneer emigrants of the middle part of the nineteenth century were Chartists disappointed in their hopes of an early triumph of Britain: they carried with them into their new homes the principles for which they had vainly striven in the old, and with comparative ease brought them into operation. Female suffrage was

longer delayed; but here again the dominions took a long lead before the mother-country. New Zealand admitted women to the vote in 1893; South Australia followed in 1894; New South Wales in 1902; Canada (like Great Britain) hesitated to make the venture until the recent war showed the feminist peril in a diminished perspective. In the new democracies, however, as in the old, one of the gravest sources of danger has been, not the admission of unqualified voters, but the apathy of the electorate. Enfranchised citizens will not take the trouble to come to the polling booth. The difficulty of obtaining a representative ballot in the dominions is, indeed, greater than it is at home. Because not only do the same causes—viz. ignorance and indifference—prevail in both alike, but in the case of the former the great distances frequently to be traversed, and the inadequacy of the means of communication, place additional barriers to electoral fidelity. New Zealand has made a drastic

and most interesting attempt to deal with this evil—the creeping paralysis of democracy—by decreeing that electors who, without satisfactory excuse, fail to register their votes shall be deprived of them. It is an admirable precedent; for it emphasises the vitally important truth that the franchise is not so much a personal right granted to a man for his own benefit, as a public duty whose functions a citizen is called upon to perform. In order to lessen the hardship which long-distance travel might impose upon scattered settlers, South Australia has introduced a system of voting by post. Throughout the Australian Federation plural voting has been abolished.

The advocates of proportional representation succeeded in securing its partial and experimental adoption in Tasmania in 1896. It was applied tentatively in Launceston and Hobart, with the idea that if it were effective and popular in these two towns it might be more widely extended. Its operation does not appear to have

evoked sufficient enthusiasm to warrant the further enlargement of its sphere. A second experiment was made when the federation of Australia took place: the principle of proportional representation was applied to elections for the Senate or Upper Chamber. Here again, according to Sir Charles Wade, the results have not been such as to encourage further trials.

Another democratic device, which in this country has for a long time had the zealous support of so powerful an organ of educated opinion as the *Spectator*, has on several important occasions been put into operation in Australia. I allude to the referendum. Whether the referendum is an instrument that should be employed, except in rare emergencies, in a unitary state with a strongly organised and clearly defined two-party system, may well be doubted. It inevitably lessens the sense of responsibility in legislators, causing them to pass rash or ill-considered measures in knowledge that the onus of accepting or

rejecting them will fall on the electorate, and leading representatives to regard their parliamentary position as unimportant since it carries with it no ultimate authority. On the other hand, it calls upon the electorate to perform functions for which it is not fitted. The prime duty of the electorate in the modern state is to determine broad general principles of government and to choose representatives to apply them in particular cases and carry them out. The detailed business of legislation, administration, and adjudication is infinitely too complex to be attended to by any but experts of high ability who can devote individual attention to it. The referendum is, in fact, a reversion to that primitive type of direct democracy which was workable only in small communities such as the Greek city-state or in simple societies such as those of the Swiss cantons of the Middle Ages. In calling upon the democracy to do something which is really beyond its capacity the referen-

dum undermines representative government. Nevertheless there are cases in which it is a useful emergency measure. Even in a unitary state with well-defined parties it may be occasionally advisable to have a poll of the people when issues unexpectedly arise which involve fundamental principles of a novel kind. But much more frequently can it be employed with advantage in federal states where there are several legislatures, and in countries where numerous groups occupy the place of two organised political parties. It is in these circumstances that the referendum has been applied in Australia. When the question of federation was under preliminary discussion two general polls were taken: that of 1898 failed to give the required majority in favour of the proposal; that of 1899, taken on an amended scheme, indicated the common will for a commonwealth. When the federal constitution was framed a stipulation was included to the effect that any proposed alteration

should be submitted to a referendum and that before being incorporated in the constitution it should be accepted, not only by a majority of states, but also by an absolute majority of voters in all the six states taken together. During the war, when the question of conscription was raised, it was submitted to the referendum and was decisively rejected. Not only in Australia as a whole, but occasionally in the separate states the referendum has been employed: in South Australia, for example, the proposal to secularise education was subjected to the test, and it failed to pass it. Both the federal vote on conscription and the sectional vote on secularisation indicate clearly the conservative tendency of the referendum. The majority moves slowly—much more slowly than eager innovators could desire. Like the mills of God, its operations, though decisive, are deliberate. Hence the referendum is the great resort of reactionaries who wish to use the name and the power of democracy

to postpone measures whose revolutionary character they dread. Hence also, and equally naturally, the referendum is denounced—though usually on grounds sophistical and insincere—by reformers who wish to do the people good, even though the people object to their benevolent proposals.

If the referendum, however, is of occasional resort in the colonies; normally, of course, legislative measures are debated and decreed by parliamentary assemblies of the usual representative type. But though these in general conform to the English model, some interesting innovations owe their introduction to the initiative of the dominions. Payment of members, for instance, was adopted by New South Wales in 1889—twenty-two years before it was adopted in Great Britain. Both Canada and Australia have made it a rule that members of their legislative assemblies who do not, as a matter of fact, attend to their duties shall lose

their seats: Canada gives two sessions' grace, but Australia only two months'. It was in colonial assemblies that the closure was first introduced to put a stop to the destruction of measures by interminable debate. New Zealand has added a further check to obstructive eloquence by imposing a time-limit upon speeches.

When we turn from legislative procedure to constitutional machinery we find a new series of instructive precedents. The question of second chambers has been one that has caused much discussion and given rise to a large variety of experiments. There has been a general consensus of opinion that a second chamber of some sort is necessary in order to check passionate or ill-considered legislation. It has been commonly agreed that even long delay and frequent disappointment are preferable to irremediable mistakes due to haste and impetuosity. The main exceptions to the bicameral rule are to be found in six of the eight provincial governments of the

Canadian Federation: Quebec and Nova Scotia have two chambers each, but all the rest have only one. It has to be borne in mind, however, that in Canada the residuary authority is vested in the central government, and that these provincial governments are more of the nature of county councils than of state parliaments. In normal cases where important governing powers reside in the dominion legislature a second chamber has been instituted. If the second chambers existent throughout the Empire are compared, it is found that two different principles are represented: some are nominated, others are elected—that is to say, some are bureaucratic, others are democratic in character. (*a*) In New South Wales, Queensland, Newfoundland, and the Dominion of Canada the second chamber is nominated by the governor in council, and the members hold office for life; in Natal the nomination extends to ten years only, in New Zealand to seven. (*b*) Elected second chambers exist in

Victoria, Western Australia, Southern Australia, Tasmania, and in the Commonwealth Government. In order to differentiate the second chamber from the first—a matter by no means easy—the electorate is narrowed by a property qualification, the period of representation is made longer (six or nine years), the method of partial renewal is resorted to (one-third or one-half of the members retiring each three years, but the whole house never being disbanded). The numbers of the Canadian Senate vary according to population, the maximum being seventy-eight; the Australian Senate, on the other hand, has a fixed number of thirty-six, each of the six members of the Commonwealth, irrespective of sizes, sending six representatives.

The marked differences between the Canadian and Australian second chambers —the one nominated but variable in size, the other elective but rigid—indicate a fundamental divergence in the nature of the two federations under review. The

present-day Dominion of Canada developed out of a unitary government; it was formed by the granting of certain specific powers to the provincial legislatures and executives; all powers not thus expressly delegated were retained by the central administration. The central administration in Canada thus entirely overtops the provincial administrations; the one and only governor sent out from the mother-country is placed in titular headship over the dominion as a whole; the eight constituent members of the dominion are related to the home government merely through the medium of the federal offices. Very different is it in the case of the Commonwealth of Australia. Here there were six independent colonies, each with its own governor; its own legislature, executive, and judiciary; its own body of law; its own tariff system; its own railways; its own public debt. All were jealous of their autonomy, and were ultimately induced to contemplate federation only because of

the growing inconveniences of separation (particularly in matters of tariff, immigration, and transport) and the growing peril from external foes. The union, when after many years of energetic and doubtful controversy it was concluded, was of the loosest possible kind. Each of the six constituent colonies retained its own governmental system intact; the new federal administration was authorised to exercise only such limited powers as were specifically assigned to it by the Commonwealth Act passed by the Imperial Parliament in 1900. The Union of South Africa, effected in 1909, occupies a constitutional position between those of the two sharply differentiated types first noted; but its characteristics class it with the Canadian rather than with the Australian model.

SECTION V

PROBLEMS OF THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

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THE foregoing survey of democracy in the dominions, sketchy and superficial though it has necessarily been, has, I hope, sufficed to show that popular government in the new British lands overseas has made experiments, run risks, and achieved triumphs beyond anything ventured or venturable in the old country. The daughters, in circumstances of emancipation and security such as their venerable mother does not enjoy and cannot hope to enjoy, have run on ahead, and have attained to a fulness of self-determination without precedent in the history of the world. But within the wide limits of the British Empire are not only communities which have outstripped the United King-

dom in democratic development, but also communities which, from one cause or another, lag far behind it. Such are, first, the colonies with representative institutions; secondly, the Crown colonies; thirdly, the dependencies and protectorates. The members of these three groups have not yet attained the status of free and equal partners in that great family of self-governing nations which constitutes the central and essential portion of the British Empire. One of the most pressing of the problems of the present is how far and by what means they can be brought into a condition which shall fit them to enter into their inheritance of responsible self-government. Closely associated with this first great problem of democracy and empire is a second—viz., the old problem of imperial federation: an old problem indeed, but one presented in a distinctly new form owing to the many constitutional devices adopted to secure the military and political unity of the Empire during the course of

the Great War. Any suggested solution of the problem of imperial federation raises a third problem—viz., that of devolution. It is inconceivable that the present Parliament of the United Kingdom, already overlarge and heterogeneous, could receive additional members in sufficient numbers to give adequate representation to the overseas dominions. Still less is it conceivable that it could undertake more business than that which already overwhelms it and paralyses its energies and capacities. What is urgently needed, indeed, is a σεισάχθεια, or disburdening ordinance, which shall relieve it on the one hand of affairs of general imperial concern, and on the other hand of affairs of merely sectional and local interest. This problem of devolution involves another problem which, because of its complexity and because of the peculiar insistency with which it presses for settlement, may be regarded as a separate problem. I mean, of course, the problem of Ireland. By

what means can the unhappy discussions which have so long sundered Celt-Ivernian from Anglo-Saxon, Catholic from Protestant, peasantry from proprietors, be healed? How can immemorial hatred, hereditary suspicion, ingrained conviction of injury, be removed from the minds of the Irish? How can the English be persuaded that it would be safe for the Empire, for Great Britain, for their kinsmen in Ireland itself, to allow any large measure of independence and self-determination to a people who have shown so little capacity for government and so little regard for either policy or compassion? The Home Rule, however, which Sinn Fein Ireland in an extreme form and by means of assassination and outrage demands, Great Britain in as full a measure as is compatible with her duty to loyal Ireland, to herself, and to the Empire, is anxious to grant. Hence no doubt, if only violence can be made to cease and passion be allowed to cool, a temporary compromise, with prospect of a

more permanent accommodation, can be discovered—of which more anon. But the endeavour to find a settlement of Anglo-Irish relations cannot fail to draw attention to the fact that both in Scotland and in Wales a similar Home Rule movement has come into prominence. Happily in these two countries it is free from the aggravations and furies which have made the Anglo-Irish Home Rule conflict from the days of Parnell to the present time so deadly a curse to all concerned in it—a curse which has cast its blight not only over Ireland and Great Britain, but over the British Dominions overseas, and over the United States of America. The most fortunate settlement of the whole devolution question would undoubtedly be one which would concede to England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland equal powers of internal self-government and should leave to the present Imperial Parliament only such matters as concerned the United Kingdom in its entirety. There is probably much

more hope of solving the Irish problem with a happy finality if it is removed from its evil isolation and is treated as a part of the wider question of devolution.

Further, if and when this question of devolution is dealt with, an opportunity will be given of considering and, if necessary, reforming the constitution of the parliaments of the kingdom, and the principles on which representation is at present determined. This is an urgent matter, because imperfections in the parliamentary system are the chief weapons in the hands of the advocates of that particular type of oligarchic dictatorship which describes itself by the euphemism "direct action." Now that German militarism is destroyed, it is by far the most deadly foe that democracy has to face. It threatens, indeed, not only democracy, but civilisation and humanity themselves. Unless it is exposed by a revelation of its true character, countered by honest government, and defeated by the strenuous resist-

ance of the community, it cannot fail to involve both democracy and empire in ruin. Such are some of the problems of the present and the future. Let us discuss them a little more in detail.

1. The problem of the extension of self-government in the Empire particularly affects the two great dependencies, India and Egypt. How far is it possible in their own interests, and in the interests of mankind at large, to set up in them the machinery of the democratic state? Let it be granted that government of the people, by the people, and for the people is the ideal at which all communities should aim. Let it also be admitted that the general tendency in the British Empire is towards democracy, and that one of the chief functions of the Empire in the world is to train its subjects in the principles and practice of autonomy. It still remains to be asked: Have the peoples of India and of Egypt yet reached that stage of political development in which they can truly and effectively govern

themselves? The answer, I believe, is that they have not. I believe, further, that if the real will of the inarticulate multitudes of both countries could be accurately ascertained, it would be found that what they ardently desire is not the setting up of a constitutional apparatus which they have as yet neither the mental nor the moral capacity to work, but rather the continued maintenance of the just and ordered rule of the British administrators beneath which they can enjoy peace, prosperity, and opportunities of self-culture. Government is not an end in itself, but merely the means to the realisation of the good life. Democracy, even though it be the perfect form of government in certain conditions, is not universally applicable. For its effective operation it imperatively demands, first, some considerable amount of knowledge and of mental capacity; secondly, a fairly high standard of moral integrity; thirdly, a strong sense of communal solidarity; and, finally, a clearly defined and powerful

public opinion. In the absence of these qualities—that is to say, in countries where the people is still ignorant, primitive, divided, and inarticulate—democracy is not a good form of government; it is not, indeed, a form of government at all, but merely a delusion whereby the people is betrayed into the hands of demagogues and dictators. It is in my view evident that any attempt to establish either in India or in Egypt any sort of democratic system of administration, such as is known in the West, would be simply to surrender the helpless masses of the community into the power of tiny oligarchies of agitators.

Take first the case of India. India is an immense sub-continent, comprising nearly two millions of square miles—that is to say, it is far larger than Europe, if Russia be left out of the calculation. Its inhabitants number over three hundred millions, or more than one-sixth of the population of the world. These vast multitudes do not form a homogeneous

nation. On the contrary, they are divided among themselves by the extremest differences of race, language, civilisation, and religion. Racial divergencies of immemorial antiquity have been accentuated and stereotyped by a caste system so rigid that the axioms of European democracy are the merest absurdities to the philosophical Brahmin. The doctrine of equality, if applied to himself and one of the pariah class, would appear but blasphemous nonsense; the doctrine of fraternity, if it so much as required him to enter the same house as one of a lower grade, would seem to him to be sacrilegious sophistry; the doctrine of liberty, if employed to raise the status of an autochthon born to slavery, would strike him as a ludicrous denial of eternal facts. The Benthamite principle of the greatest good of the greatest number would be regarded as obviously false in a population wherein a man of one caste outweighs in value and importance all the constituent members of

a lower caste taken together. The very idea of the rule of the majority is alien from the mode of thought of the Indian, in whom inequality is incarnate: it is entirely beyond his conception. These fundamental differences of race and caste correspond to equally irreconcilable divergencies of civilisation. The peoples of India vary in culture from the primitive hill-tribes, some of whom are still in the rudimentary Stone Age of development, to the cultivated Aryans and Dravidians to whom the education of both East and West have given an acuteness and a polish unsurpassed among men. Between extremes so far removed from one another there is no single factor in common. Add to this contrast in cultures the fact that there are some two hundred different languages spoken in the Peninsula.* There is no common means of communication whatsoever in India except the English language. But

* The most important are Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, and Punjabi.

even more potent as a divider than race, culture, or language is religion. There are dozens of religions in India; but the one great impassable gulf is that which separates Hinduism, with its galaxy of gods, from Mohammedanism with its fanatical devotion to monotheism. It is estimated that there are 218,000,000 of Hindus and 67,000,000 of Mohammedans. Before the establishment of the strong British rule the relations of the two great faiths was one of chronic and irreconcilable civil war. Only the British power has kept the peace for the past two centuries. Whatever professions of philosophical harmony may nowadays be made by advanced Indian politicians who have shaken themselves free from all religious fetters, the fires of ancient animosity burn as fiercely below the surface of Indian life to-day as they have ever done, and await but the opportunity to burst forth once again in devastating conflict. In circumstances such as these it

seems evident the conditions of successful democracy are conspicuously wanting. The removal of British authority would merely mean the establishment of Brahminical tyranny tempered by anarchy. To say this is not wholly to condemn the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals for Indian constitutional reform. They appear, it is true, to go a great deal farther than is wise or safe—although, of course, not nearly far enough to satisfy the extreme demands of the so-called "nationalists" (a ludicrous term as applied to India). Nevertheless they lay down one sound principle—viz., that training in democracy must begin from below. They accept the wise opinion of Mr. Gokhale, who "looked to local self-government to provide the real school of political education." They agree that "there should be as far as possible complete popular control in local bodies, and the largest possible independence for them of outside control." They would appear also to be on safe ground when they say

that "the provinces are the domain in which the earlier steps towards the progressive realisation of responsible government should be taken." But from this point of secure generalisation they quickly descend to the morass. First, they give too much responsibility to the provincial councils at their start; secondly, they encourage them to ask for more; thirdly, they leave in dangerous vagueness the line of demarcation between their powers and those of the central government. They establish an unstable dualism which can only end in anarchy. Their fault is that they want to hurry too much the natural processes of evolution, and to complete in the term of a transient ministry a development which normally would take many generations. This fault is explicable, if not pardonable; for now that by travel, by education, by countless means of intercourse and communication, East and West have been mingled, it is no longer possible that the slowness of the one should not be

accelerated by the rapidity of the other. Nevertheless the attempt to hustle the primitive populations of India into self-government can end in nothing but failure and disaster.

The case of Egypt is analogous to that of India, but a good deal simpler. It is true that until lately the tangle of Egypt's international position was inextricable. In theory Egypt was a part of the Turkish Empire; in theory the Khedive was its authoritative administrator under the Sultan; in theory France and England exercised joint control over its finances because of the Khedive Ismail's bankruptcy and his deposition by the Sultan in 1879. But in fact, from 1882 the actual maintenance of law and order, the effective defence of Egypt from invasion, and the general government of its peoples had fallen more and more into English hands. The record of Lord Cromer's unsought but ever-growing influence during the twenty-five years of his agency (1883–1907)

is a splendid story of high purpose and fine achievement. It restored Egypt to peace and prosperity from a condition of misery and insolvency. Lord Cromer endeavoured through the whole course of his long tenure of office to associate native politicians with Europeans in the scheme of restoration. But, in spite of devoted and patriotic service on the part of some, he was so much hampered by faction, corruption, incompetence, laziness, and treachery, that he had to rely mainly on his own countrymen. The same difficulties of race, language, and religion as faced Indian statesmen faced him, although on a smaller scale. Arabs, Syrians, Persians, Turks, Greek, Italians, French, British, Nubians, Berbers, Bedouins, Copts—these and other representatives of three continents meet in this melting-pot of civilisations. Though no religious schism comparable to that which divides Hinduism from Islam tore Egypt into two, yet conflicts among Mohammedans, Christians,

Zoroastrians, and Jews, were sufficiently serious to destroy all possibility of national union. But since the opening of the present century, albeit the racial and religious unity of Egypt is no nearer, yet the international situation has become much less complicated. In 1904 a settlement was happily reached with France whereby Britain was left in sole control; the entry of Turkey into the German War of 1914 made it possible and proper for the suzerainty of the Sultan to be repudiated; at the same time a new Egyptian administration was set up and a British protectorate proclaimed. Unless violent agitation on the part of a self-conscious handful of *illuminati* causes premature concessions to be made, it will be long before the raising of the general standard of education and morality, together with the subsidence of the passions produced by alien blood and clashing creeds, allows Egypt to be regarded as a nation capable of full self-government.

2. In turning, then, from the problem of the extension of democracy in the Empire to the problem of the formation of a closer federation, India and Egypt may for the moment be left out of account. They will, of course, have to be included in the federation; and they will have to have places assigned to them proportionate to their importance. But they cannot at first be included on the same terms and in the same way as the self-governing communities of white men who inhabit the dominions. The immediate and crucial problem of federation is how these dominions can be associated with the mother-country in the determination of the policy of the Empire and in the provision of the means for its defence. It has already been pointed out that, in spite of the failure of the Imperial Federation League to achieve its purpose, circumstances combined to render the closer union of the constituent members of the Empire essential during the years of growing international strain which were

inaugurated by Germany's colonial activities in 1884. It has further been noted that this necessary union was effected first by the quiet but steady and potent influence of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; secondly, by the Committee of Imperial Defence; and thirdly, by the recurrent meetings of Imperial Conferences, which continually increased in prestige and power. At the Conference of 1907 Sir Joseph Ward, Prime Minister of New Zealand, formally proposed the establishment of an elective Imperial Chamber with legislative and executive powers; but the proposal was rejected on the grounds that on the one hand, it would impair the authority of the United Kingdom, and on the other hand would itself be irresponsible, since it would derive its powers not from a single electorate, but from a number of scattered and uncoördinatede electorates. Beyond the point of the Imperial Conferences, then, things had not gone when the war broke out. The intense heats of the five years of

terrific struggle (1914–19), during which the Empire was fighting for very life against titanic foes, fused many obstacles to union, and welded the links that bound together the comrades in arms. During the war an Imperial Conference was called in 1917; the Government of India was invited to take part, and actually sent representatives. The matters discussed were, of course, primarily military; but leisure was found to consider the future economic relations of the members of the Empire. It was felt that the occasion was not opportune for the opening of the question of constitutional relations; but at the same time it was realised that no return could ever be made to the vague and unsatisfactory conditions of 1914. Hence, a resolution was passed to the effect that "the members of the Imperial War Conference are of opinion that the readjustment of the constitutional relations of the component parts of the Empire is too important and intricate a subject to be dealt with during the war

and that it should form the subject of a special Imperial Conference to be summoned as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities." That special conference has yet to meet. Its deliberations and decisions will be of the highest importance to Britain, to the Empire, to the League of Nations, and to the World at large. This resolution, however, was not the only, or the chief, fruit of the war, and the new circumstances which the war brought into being. An Imperial War Cabinet came into existence, spontaneously and silently, informally and inevitably, as most permanent institutions have come into existence when necessity has called them forth at recurring crises in the history of the flexible and adaptable British peoples. First, a British War Cabinet of five members was appointed in order to give a rapidity and a continuity of action impossible with the overgrown civilian cabinet (containing more than twenty members) of the piping times of peace.

To this small executive body were added, in order to co-ordinate and concentrate the war-efforts of the Empire, "the Prime Minister of each of the dominions, or some specially accredited alternate possessed of equal authority, and a representative of the Indian people to be appointed by the Government of India." By this novel, informal, and heterogeneous body decisions on matters of policy of the highest importance were made during the course of the war. When the fighting ceased and the peace conference assembled in Paris, this same body, under the name of the British Empire Delegation, conducted negotiations on behalf of the great commonwealth of nations that recognise the flag of King George V. The question naturally arises: To whom was this Imperial War Cabinet responsible? The answer is that it was responsible to no single legislative assembly whatsoever; but that its individual members remained severally responsible to the legislatures of the

dominions to which they respectively belonged. There was no joint responsibility at all, except perhaps in the case of the British group of ministers who formed the nucleus of the War Cabinet, and continued (in theory at any rate) to be answerable to the Parliament of the United Kingdom. The formation of this War Cabinet, though an emergency measure, is undoubtedly an immense step towards the realisation of imperial unity in matters of policy. But it is clear that its corporate irresponsibility rules it out, in its present form, as a permanent factor in the government of the Empire. One of two things must take place: either it must divest itself of all its executive functions and reduce itself to the level of a mere advisory body to the cabinet of the United Kingdom; or a genuine Imperial Parliament containing elected representatives from all parts of the Empire must be created from which the Imperial Cabinet may be chosen and to which it may become responsible. The

latter alternative—that is to say, the creation of a new federal parliament which should deal with all matters of foreign policy, intercolonial policy, Indian affairs, military and naval business—is advocated by the able and patriotic knights of the *Round Table*. The development of the War Cabinet is, however, clearly the line along which events seem to be leading us. During the course of the war the great dominions have become more and not less independent than they were before. Their representatives signed the public treaty as though they had been accredited by sovereign states. They themselves as separate peoples entered the League of Nations. The British Empire is obviously destined to become a confederation and not a federation; a *Staatenbund* and not a *Bundesstaat ;* a league of nations within the larger league, not a composite unitary state.

3. If the problem of devolution is thus freed from complication with the problem

of federation, it becomes more manageable, although still difficult. If, however, the two problems have to be faced at one and the same time they become almost insoluble. To define the constitutions, the limits, the powers, the sources of revenue, of, first, a federal parliament of the Empire; secondly, the parliament of the United Kingdom; and, thirdly, new legislative assemblies for England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland respectively, would indeed be a colossal task. It would be a task to tax the ingenuity of a Locke, a Bentham, or a Siéyès; and if it were accomplished it would result in the creation of a complex puzzle which the British elector—to say nothing of the overseas electors—would not be able to understand and would not try to work. At all costs the multiplication of elections must be avoided. Experience has shown that a parliamentary election and a municipal election are together sufficient completely to exhaust the voting capacity of the average citizen.

If he is asked to vote for more, he simply does not turn out. Hence if either imperial federation or constitutional devolution is contemplated, it is of vital importance that no additional burden should be placed upon the shoulders of the enfranchised.

Ruling imperial federation out, we may concentrate attention on devolution. Of its need there can be no question. The present House of Commons is hopelessly congested with business relating (1) to the Empire as a whole; (2) to the United Kingdom; (3) England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland individually; (4) sections of any and all of them. It is necessary to separate these four groups of affairs: to relegate matters relating to the Empire as a whole for detailed consideration and report to the Imperial Conference and the Imperial Cabinet; to concentrate the labours of the present House of Commons, and of the second chamber appendant to it, upon the general business of the United Kingdom; to set up legislative councils

to deal with the special affairs of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland; to grant much larger powers of self-government to county, borough, district, and parish councils. The two main questions that arise out of this scheme of devolution are: First, what are to be the areas to which the new legislative councils are to be assigned? Secondly, what are to be the constitution and powers of these councils? These matters have been carefully considered by an important conference, called by the Speaker, which issued its report on May 14, 1920.* To this comprehensive document the student should refer. Only a few words can be said here. First, as to areas: England is historically and politically so organically a single unit that no thought of partition can for a moment be entertained; Scotland and Wales are

* The report is numbered Cmd. 692. A summary of it will be found in the press of May 13, 1920. Important articles dealing with its recommendations appeared in *The Times*, from the pen of Mr. Murray Macdonald, on July 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

also obvious units, and there is nothing in their size or population to suggest division. Ireland is neither historically nor politically one, and it is suggested that the natural policy is to establish one legislative council for Ulster and to allow the other three provinces either to have one each or, if they would prefer it, one in common: on no account should Ulster be partitioned; nothing should be done to place any obstacle in the way of the union of Ulster with the other provinces if at any time all the parties concerned should desire it. Secondly, as to the constitution of the legislative councils. The two rival proposals are (1) the Speaker's, according to which for each of the council areas the council shall consist of "all the members returned to the House of Commons to sit for constituencies in that area"; (2) Mr. Murray Macdonald's, according to which "each subordinate legislature shall have a directly elected chamber" consisting of the same number of persons as the members of parliament for the area in

question, but of which the members of parliament themselves shall not be eligible. Both schemes have virtues, and each is able to claim a body of powerful supporters. The Speaker's scheme avoids a separate election, and renders a clash of policy and jurisdiction improbable. Mr. Macdonald's scheme is the only one of the two to which the term "devolution" can properly be applied; it offers real relief to both Parliament and its overburdened members. But both schemes have grave defects. The Speaker's scheme, so far from relieving members of parliament, adds to their burdens: spring, summer, and autumn they are to be at it; less than ever could they cope with the demands made upon them; if even now they are divided into the quick and the dead, under the new conditions no increase of celerity could save them. Mr. Macdonald's scheme has the demerit of involving a special election, and by excluding members of parliament altogether it introduces the dangers of

conflict and duplication. A working compromise would seem to be possible on some such lines as the following: Elections for the Parliament of the United Kingdom should remain as at present; one-third of the members of parliament for each area should sit in the legislative council for that area; of the remaining members one-third should be chosen by the county and borough councils within the area, and one-third should be co-opted. The choosing of the one-third of the members of parliament might be left in the hands of the respective party groups, and in any case should be in proportion to the party strengths in the House of Commons. It would be understood that the one-third selected should devote their main attention to the business of the legislative council (though they would still sit and vote in Parliament), while the two-thirds left would be able to concentrate their whole thought upon foreign and imperial affairs and upon subjects affecting the United Kingdom as

a whole. By this compromise (1) the burden of the separate general election would be avoided; (2) not only Parliament but two-thirds of its members would be relieved; and (3) Parliament and legislative councils would be linked and harmonised. Of course, the linking third would be hard pressed; but it would be possible to find that number who could give their whole time and energy to politics, and the understanding that their main duty should be conciliar and not parliamentary would ease the position. But whatever plan is adopted devolution is essential: it is the only alternative to destruction.

4. When this urgent matter of devolution comes up for discussion and settlement, an opportunity will be given to consider one or two fundamental questions of parliamentary and electoral reform. On the one hand the second-chamber problem will be directly raised; on the other hand the problem of the basis of democratic

representation will be brought up for reconsideration. The House of Lords is at the present time performing an extraordinarily useful function in the constitution. Its debates are conducted at a far higher level than those of the House of Commons. Its criticisms of the countless hasty and immature measures rushed through the lower chamber in these days of congestion, closure, and committee, are invaluable: not only do they save the country from many a disaster, but they form an indispensable factor in the education of public opinion. The members of the House of Lords include an exceptional number of men of the highest ability, finest character, and most splendid record of public service. But it must be admitted that the majority of the shining lights among the Lords are those which have attained their present luminous altitude by motions of their own, and that they do not include many who owe their places in the firmament to their ancestors. The dominantly heredi-

tary character of the House of Lords is an anachronism. It is a source of weakness to the House, a cause of offence to democrats, and a serious defect in the constitution. Fortunately the way of reform is clearly marked out. The recommendations of Lord Bryce's Conference indicate the main lines of necessary change.

5. Another matter which has not yet received quite so much consideration, but yet one which is rapidly forcing itself upon public attention, is the question of the basis of our democratic representation. The ancient constituencies of the United Kingdom are all local constituencies. At the very beginning of parliamentary history it was the territorial communities of county and town which returned members. These venerable and acutely self-conscious units of social tradition, political activity, and economic privilege continued to send representatives to Parliament—two each, irrespective of population—until the industrial revolution destroyed the local

integrity, and the Reform Acts introduced new electoral units. But the new electoral units of the Reform Acts were, and are, still local—*e.g.*, districts of counties and fragments of great towns—a horrible hotch-potch of truncated organisms and amalgamated incompatibles. Our local constituencies are no longer "communitates"; they lack corporate life; they consist of so many thousands of casual inhabitants who, like Omar Khayyam's Sultan, repose in them for one oblivious moment on the way to death. They have no common consciousness, no united interest, no general will which any elected member can represent. The barriers of locality have, in fact, been broken down: the country has become territorially a unit. A new principle of division and classification has appeared: it is functional and not geographical. The really vital "communitates" of the present day are the trade unions, the socialist societies, the chambers of commerce, the citizens' leagues, the employers' federa-

tions, the industrial trusts, the financial combines, and so on. It is because life flows in the veins of these organisms, and because parliamentary constituencies are so generally inorganic and artificial aggregations of accidents, that power tends to pass from our unrepresentative legislature with its unstable cabinet, and to be seized by the delegates of the massed industries or the consolidated interests. At present these great corporations have might without responsibility: they bring their enormous power to bear upon politics either by the "direct action" of strikes and menaces or by the indirect action of corruption and conspiracy. In order to give them a constitutional outlet for the electoral influence which they possess, but which in present circumstances they cannot use with full effect, it is desirable that some means should be devised by which an elector may record his vote *either* in his local constituency *or*, if he prefer it, as a member of his industrial or commercial union. Only by giving

to the industrial and commercial unions the full corporate influence which is properly theirs, and by enabling them to exercise it through constitutional channels, will it be possible to avoid that conflict between functionalism and parliamentarism which, as already has been noted, is the imminent peril of the moment. The supreme issue of the day, indeed, in the British Empire is the issue of direct action *versus* democracy. To that issue we will turn in our concluding section.

SECTION VI

CONCLUSION: DIRECT ACTION *VERSUS* DEMOCRACY

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ONE of the most serious consequences of the defects of our present parliamentary system of government is that some solid support seems to be given to that agitation in favour of "direct action" which is just now causing so fierce an upheaval in the world of labour. It is unfortunately possible to contend with some plausibility, although with only partial truth, that the majority in the House of Commons does not accurately voice public opinion; that elections are fought on false issues; that Parliament has lost control over the executive; that secret and sinister interests have more influence over the Government than have the representatives of the people —and so on. These contentions, I say, are but fragmentarily true; but that they

should have any foundation at all in fact is deplorable. It should be the strenuous aim of every sincere democrat to purify Parliament and to make it the full and effective agent of public opinion and the general will. But even if all the accusations levelled against constitutional government were well established, it would still be the duty of every lover of his country and every friend of humanity to devote his whole energy to the reform of representative institutions and to resist to his last breath all attempts, however attractive and insidious, to substitute force for argument and to revert to the primitive method of breaking heads in lieu of the civilised method of counting them. Even if it be true that the House of Commons sent up, say, at the last General Election, obtained its mandate by fraud and corruption, cajolery and lies, the proper remedy is to expose its evil practices, to educate and inflame the electorate, and to prepare for it a well-merited débâcle when next it

presents itself at the polls. If the electoral system is one that gives an advantage to chicanery, it is within the power of the enfranchised democracy to alter it. In the United Kingdom and in the dominions the people is in absolute control. It can do what it likes. The process of the education and inflammation of the people may, of course, be a long one, and meantime much wrong may be done. But the life of the nation is still longer, and it is infinitely better that much wrong should be done by constitutional means than that it should be prevented by the "direct action" of an enlightened minority. For the method of democratic administration is the rule of the majority. No one pretends that the majority is infallible. On the contrary, it is freely admitted that the majority is liable to make all sorts of mistakes and to commit all kinds of injustices. It is even admitted that its errors and its faults may be so grave as to warrant a resistance and a rebellion that results in its overthrow.

But let there be no illusions respecting that contingency. The overthrow of the rule of the majority means reversion to some form of minority rule, and the consequent reduction of the majority to the political condition of the proletariat of the days before the passing of the Reform Acts.

It may safely be said, however, that if the defects of our modern parliamentary system furnish pretexts for the propaganda of the advocates of "direct action," the real causes of their agitation lie deeper and are less visible to the naked eye. They aim—no doubt with sincere conviction and with genuine enthusiasm—at ends which they know are unpopular; which have not only been repudiated by the electorate, but, as they are aware, would again be repudiated, however the poll were taken. They aim at revolution; at the disruption of the present system of society; at the expropriation of land and capital; at the setting up of a dictatorship similar to that of Russia; at a political reconstruction that

would be fatal both to the British democracy and the British Empire. The means by which they hope to achieve their purpose is the "general strike"—a revolt against the community as a whole carried through with ruthless resolution; a class war waged with remorseless ferocity; a blockade pushed to the extreme of strangulation. Hence they devote infinite pains and great organising ability of the military order to regimenting the so-called armies of labour for the great onslaught on the nation. Their first serious attempt to precipitate the revolution was made at the end of September, 1919, by means of the railway strike. The *Daily Herald*, the leading revolutionary organ, revealed its hopes by publishing, from the pen of the sensational novelist, W. L. George, a scheme for a Soviet Republic, under the heading "Be prepared! People, make ready to rule!" The directors of the movement, however, had made grave miscalculations: they had not realised the resentment of the outraged

community; they had underestimated the resources of the Government; they had not sufficiently secured the support of other unions and of the co-operative societies. Hence the rebellion failed; and but for two errors on the part of the Government its failure would have been spectacular and most salutary. These two errors were, first, that the Government allowed the issue to be diverted from the supreme question of order and authority in the state to the side question of railwaymen's wages; it flooded the country not with a call to all true citizens to resist anarchy, but with unintelligible and disputable tables of statistics; secondly, that when the strike was broken it intervened to "save the face" of the revolutionary leaders by calling off its forces and making a compromise which enabled the supporters of the movement to proclaim it a success. The leaders who were thus unhappily saved from the discredit which a disastrous and resounding defeat would have brought upon them

have been left in control. They have recently been reinforced by the advent to office of new leaders even more violent than themselves. They are at this very moment busily engaged in perfecting their organisation in preparation for a new and not distant attack upon government, society, and the democratic state: they are forming new amalgamations and alliances among powerful unions; they are conscripting numerous recruits into their legions; they are drafting fresh and elaborate plans of campaign; they are ensuring that the next assault upon "capitalism" shall be delivered by the entire masses of their forces; they are drawing the co-operative societies within their meshes in order that strikers may be fed while the community at large is starved into surrender; they are arranging to capture and control the press in order that nothing inimical to the strikers shall be able to obtain publication; they are parleying with Irish Sinn Feiners, Indian and Egyptian "nationalists," Russian

Bolsheviks (extreme anti-nationalists !), German Spartacists, Italian anarchists, Independent Workers of the World.

No such formidable attack upon popular self-government has ever been made as that which is being rapidly prepared by the leaders of organised labour in this country. It is more formidable than the Prussian attack made in 1914, because it is an attack made from within the country by those who enjoy the rights and privileges of the democratic franchise. But it is essentially the same as the Prussian attack, both in spirit and in method. It is a conspiracy by a militant oligarchy of pan-proletarians to establish a dictatorship over the community. Their Bernhardi is Karl Marx, and their modes of preparing for the class war are identical with those which the Germans employed in view of the European War recently concluded. Elaborate organisation, skilful formulation of plans, laborious accumulation of funds and munitions, secret diplomacy, insidious propa-

ganda, careful manœuvring for position, deliberate and exasperating provocation, diligent search for a strategic pretext for declaring the conflict open, supreme disregard of treaty obligations—such are the methods common to the Prussian fomenters of the last war and to the revolutionary projectors of the next war. If it be asked why the millions of sober and law-abiding British citizens who form the immense majority of the members of the trade unions allow such leaders to be elected, and support them in their sinister designs, the answer is the same as that which has to be given to the question why the Germans tolerated and followed the Junkers. It is this; that the conscript masses follow their powerful leaders so long as it is dangerous to resist them and profitable to go with them. The German masses, for all their cosmopolitan social-democracy, went with their pan-nationalist war-lords so long as opposition was treason, and so long as they led them to victory, glory, plunder, and dominion.

When victory declined to defeat, glory to humiliation, plunder to reparation, and dominion to disaster, then the masses turned upon the war-lords and rent them with a fury of contumely and disgust. Similarly the multitudes of the British trade unionists, many of whom have been forced into the unions against their will, follow their leaders and obey their commands—that is, strike, dawdle, restrict output, etc.—often with secret disapproval, but with submission, so long as to resist means persecution, boycott, destitution, and death, and so long as acquiescence means frequent increases of wages, shortening of hours, relaxations of discipline, opportunities for sloth and self-indulgence. It is to expect too much of human nature to ask it to oppose the revolutionary oligarchy when opposition involves destruction, and obedience brings prosperity. It is regrettable, but yet entirely explicable, that improvements in remuneration and conditions of labour which moderate leaders by

constitutional means have sought in vain for many years have been secured in a moment by the men of violence by means of the strike weapon, actually employed or menacingly brandished. So it was in international affairs before the war. The Prussian militarist, with mailed fist and shining armour, gained concession after concession which he certainly would not have got if his manners had been milder and his appearance less terrifying. But the end of concession came in the one case, and it inevitably must come, and must come soon, in the other. The limits of surrender in matters of wages, hours of labour, share of management, have almost been reached. The issue which the Junkers of Labour have long foreseen and prepared for cannot much longer be postponed. What will the outcome be?

Can there be any doubt as to the ultimate outcome, however severe and protracted the struggle may be? Is it to be thought of that liberty, self-government, nationality,

the commonwealth of the British Empire, all the inherited treasures of this ancient and splendid dominion, having survived the tremendous ordeal of the German war, shall perish before the assault of a handful of social revolutionaries? It is unthinkable. The conflict, indeed, might already have been over in its most critical phase if only the Government had remained firm at the time of the railway strike in the autumn of 1919; disillusionment was already disintegrating the strikers; a decisive victory was in sight; that unprovoked and abominable attack upon the community might have been the Battle of the Marne to the war-lords of labour. The too easy granting of an armistice to the defeated "direct actionists" has postponed the crucial conflict to the future, and has made it probable that when it comes it will be ten times more severe than it would otherwise have been. But, even so, it can have but one end. Direct action will be beaten by democracy. Whatever sufferings the British

people may have to endure they will not bow their necks beneath the yoke of the proletarian dictators.

It remains to be seen on what precise issue the conflict will be joined. There are, however, clear indications as to its nature. The class-war lords have already made several soundings of their own followers and of the community, in order to see on what questions they are likely to meet with most support from the one, and least resistance from the other; they have already surveyed several possible battle-fields. The first matter which seemed to promise well was the question of the nationalisation of coal-mines. But the prospect of fighting the state in order to compel the state to take over concerns which it did not want to take over was not one that appealed to the rank and file. As for the community, it was ready for the challenge; for it perceived that "nationalisation" was a term which had much changed its meaning since Fabian

days: it no longer meant state control, but merely state dole; it meant that syndicalists would manage the mines in their own interests and that the subjugated state and the terrorised community would have to pay whatever the ruling oligarchy of the Miners' Federation should dictate. Hence the nationalisation issue was "turned down." The next issue that offered hope of war was the Russian issue. It seemed to some of the more zealous Marxian proletarians of the middle class that the spectacle of a communist and commissary government being bullied and blockaded by a capitalist and bourgeois government would rouse the British workers to sympathetic fury. It did not do so, however, for the simple and sufficient reason that the Bolshevist régime of Russia was seen to be a bureaucratic and anti-democratic tyranny incomparably more sanguinary and less competent than that of the Tsardom at its worst; it disbanded the popularly elected assembly; it suppressed dis-

cussion; it silenced opposition with massacre; it ruled by means of red guards; it conscripted labour and prohibited strikes; and even so, it could not prevent Russia from sinking into the very abyss of destitution, anarchy, and disease. British labour was not to be led by the ideologues of its "general staff" into conflict on behalf of such a negation of democracy, humanity, morality, and common sense erected into a system of murder and plunder. A third tentative effort on behalf of the kindred but short-lived dictatorship of the unspeakable Bela Kun in Hungary was similarly a failure. More successful was a fourth experiment in revolution—viz., the attempt to secure the acceptance of a "down tools" policy in support of the Sinn Fein nationalists of Ireland. At a special Trade Union Congress held on July 13, 1920, a resolution was passed recommending "direct action"—*i.e.*, a general strike—in case the Government should refuse the "demand" of the Congress that all British

troops should be withdrawn from Ireland. It is safe to predict that on this matter the triumph of the social revolutionaries will go but little farther: a few spasmodic risings there may be in places where Irish labour is strong, but that is all that is probable. Apart from the fact that hosts of trade unionists are Orangemen, who regard the British troops as their allies against outrage, the savage ferocity of Sinn Fein has alienated the sympathy and roused the intense abhorrence of every decent man not obsessed by political passion: it is felt that no wrongs, however imaginary, could possibly justify methods so monstrous or murder so treacherous and cold-blooded.

All attempts in this country to stir up "direct action"—that is, to precipitate a revolution—on any purely political issue are doomed to failure. Of this fact the abler members of the "general staff" of the misleaders of labour are well aware by this time: they must look with severe disapproval upon the efforts of their indis-

creet and undisciplined subordinates to choose Russia, Hungary, or Ireland as a battle-ground. They have come to recognise that only on industrial questions can they hope to get their multitudinous forces to obey orders and to fight with full determination to win. The raising of wages, the shortening of hours, the coercing of blacklegs (those unpitied "conscientious objectors" of the world of labour), the flouting of managers, the mulcting of capitalists—these, and such as these, are the only matters concerning which the rank and file can be counted on to do serious battle. The problem before the "general staff," then, is how to turn industrial unrest to political ends. It is a problem, unfortunately, which presents many possibilities of solution. Questions of wages, of prices, of output, of industrial control, if pushed far enough, involve the life of the community and the stability of the state. Take, for example, the question of the nationalisation of the mines. This as a

question of politics has been answered, for the present at any rate, with an emphatic negative by the Government and by public opinion. But how easy to raise it again indirectly as an industrial question! All that is necessary is for the Miners' Federation to demand on the one hand a drastic reduction in the price of coal (how alluring to the unhappy consumer!), or on the other hand a thumping increase in the wages of the miners (how unifying and fortifying a battle-cry for the forces of the Federation!). If either of these concessions is granted the coal industry as a commercial venture is ruined; it ceases to pay dividends; it becomes dependent on doles; it falls into the hands of the state; it is nationalised! If, on the contrary, both these demands are refused, then the leaders of the Federation can confidently reckon on the obedience of their army when they call for the universal strike; they can count on the support of the other members of the triple alliance; they can ensure by

secret diplomacy the interested assistance of compositors, co-operators, and hosts of other organised groups. They can, in short, precipitate the great revolutionary "general strike." And it is abundantly evident that that is what they mean to do. The economic disorder of the world is very great just now; they are fomenting it in every conceivable way. The only hope of an early return to normal stability and prosperity is by straitest economy and most productive work; they encourage every extravagant demand, and denounce diligence as though it were a crime. They are determined to precipitate the class war, and it is difficult to see how they can be persuaded or prevented from doing so. They are in exactly the mood and temper of the Prussians of 1914, and it is doubtful if they can be brought to reason except by the same drastic remedy of self-incurred disaster. Only when they have launched their impending attack upon the community; have

brought all their hosts into battle; have met the indignant resistance of the threatened nation; have been repulsed, and have seen their disillusioned followers deserting them in their distress—only then, it is to be feared, will they realise the error of their ways, and be prepared to join William of Hohenzollern in melancholy and execrated retirement.

The defeat of the social revolutionaries will be the victory of democracy; the awakening of emancipated British labour from the nightmare horror of the dictatorship of the cosmopolitan Bolshevists will be the permanent establishment of the British Empire. Labour—genuine labour, the healthy body of the imperial democracy—is destined to rule both Britain and the dominions. But the only manner in which it can rule them is the old, well-tried, slowly developed method of constitutional government. This method of discussion, persuasion, election, vote, is necessarily cumbrous and protracted: it is

inevitably a source of impatience to the eager idealist and a cause of disgust to the zealous reformer. But it is the only means by which progress without reaction can be assured. All great advances, it is true, are initiated by minorities, usually by minorities of one; so also, it may be remarked, are all great lunacies and aberrations. Majorities begin by opposing all innovations alike, whether good or bad. A majority crucified Christ; He did not denounce or resist it, but pitied it, prayed for it, and sent His disciples to educate and convert it. But if a majority at first rejected Christ, it can be counted on with equal immobility to reject the modern Anti-Christ until he has proved his claims by persuasion and by power. The faith of a democrat requires him to believe that in the long run the majority of the people finds its way to the truth, and that in the long run it tries to do the right. Certain it is that it is better to recognise the inherent and inalienable sovereignty of the people and to

suffer many absurdities and injustices at its hands, rather than to defy it, repudiate it, and set up over against it and above it, by means of " direct action," the dictatorship of a minority, however highly illuminated and however morally exalted.

When Britain and the Empire have passed through the crisis of these anxious days, they will emerge as the stronghold of popular government and the sure safeguard of the world's peace. The future, no doubt, will continue to bring many problems difficult of solution; but when the firm lines of democratic procedure are recognised by all, no fear need be felt as to the possibility or certainty of settlement. It is only when rebellion and resistance are threatened that the conditions of settlement are wanting. When all agree to accept the will of the majority, even though for the moment the majority may be wrong, then alone is democratic progress feasible. Even so, of course, there will be risks; but existence itself is a risk. Is it

not the American Winston Churchill who says:

> "Democracy's an adventure—the great adventure of mankind. I think the trouble in many minds lies in the fact that they persist in regarding it as something to be made safe. All that can be done is to try to make it as safe as possible. But no adventure is safe—life itself is an adventure, and neither is that safe. It's a hazard, as you and I have found out. The moment we try to make life safe we lose all there is in it worth while."

In spite of all, the present is a time not for pessimism but for confident hope; and the hope of the world centres to no small extent round the sanity of the British democracy and the stability of the British Empire.

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